# Art
# and
# Understanding

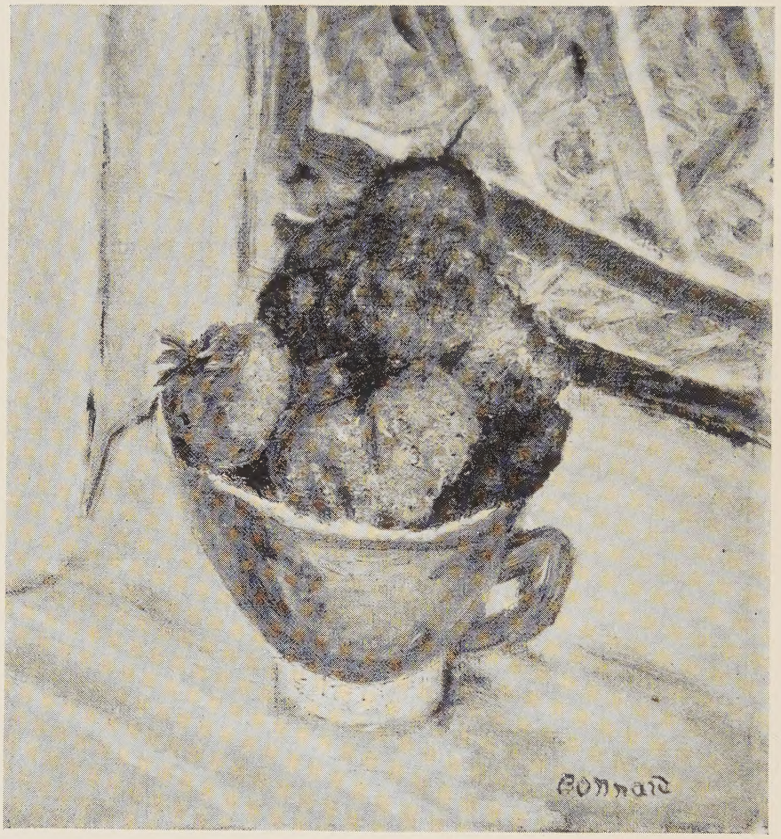
A PHILLIPS PUBLICATION

ROUSSEAU'S "THE PINK CANDLE"

PHILLIPS MEMORIAL GALLERY
1608 TWENTY-FIRST STREET
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2022 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation

https://archive.org/details/artunderstanding0001unse




PIERRE BONNARD

STRAWBERRIES

# ART AND UNDERSTANDING

VOL. I MARCH, 1930 NO. 2


## CONTENTS


THE PINK CANDLE, by Rousseau . . . . . *Cover*
STRAWBERRIES, by Bonnard, *Illustration* . . . . *Frontispiece*
UNION SQUARE, by Kantor, *Illustration* . . . . . 130
MODERN ART, 1930, by Duncan Phillips . . . . . 131
ON THE STOUR, by Constable, *Illustration* . . . . . 133
BOWL OF PLUMS, by Chardin, *Illustration* . . . . . 134
MONT ST. VICTOIRE, by Cézanne, *Illustration* . . . . . 141
PLAZA DEL POPOLO, by Bonnard, *Illustration* . . . . . 142
ART AND THE INTERNATIONAL MIND, by Duncan Phillips . 145
THE NEWSPAPER, by Vuillard, *Illustration* . . . . . 148
ART AND THE BUSINESS MAN, by Charles Law Watkins . . 149
LIVING WITH PICTURES, by Charles Downing Lay . . . 156
TERMS WE USE IN ART CRITICISM, D. P. and C. L.W. . . 160
ABSTRACT STILL LIFE, by Braque, *Illustration* . . . . . 161
THE BLACKSMITH, by Per Krohg, *Illustration* . . . . . 162
A BRUNETTE, by Derain, *Illustration* . . . . . 169
CYPRESSES, by Van Gogh, *Illustration* . . . . . 176
CURRENT AMERICAN ART SEASON, by Ralph Flint . . . 177
STILL LIFE, by Cézanne, *Illlustration* . . . . . 181
MME. HENRIOT, by Renoir, *Illustration* . . . . . 186
PROMENADE, by Burchfield, *Illustration* . . . . . 193
THREE JUGS, by Weber, *Illustration* . . . . . 194
SEATED WOMAN, by Picasso, *Illustration* . . . . . 197
WOMAN IN WHITE, by Picasso, *Illustration* . . . . . 198
THE PALM, by Bonnard, *Illustration* . . . . . 201


[CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE]

## CONTENTS—*Continued*


Pose of Buddha, by Matisse, *Illustration* . . . . . 202
From Horse Mountain, by Marin, *Illustration* . . . . 207
Fishing Smacks, by Marin, *Illustration* . . . . . 208
Horses, by Chirico, *Illustration* . . . . . 211
Horses of Attica, by Davies, *Illustration* . . . . . 212
Ranchos Church, by O'Keeffe, *Illustration* . . . . . 215
The Makings of an Omelette, by Sickert, *Illustration* . . 221
Rain in the Jungle, by Rousseau, *Illustration* . . . . 226
Rousseau le Douanier, by Henry McBride . . . . . 227
Two Composition Sketches by Puvis de Chavannes, by Will Hutchins . . . . . 230
Greek Colony, by Chavannes, *Illustration* . . . . . 235
Port of the Orient, by Chavannes, *Illustration* . . . . 236
A Note on Subjective Painting, by Augustus Vincent Tack 240
Our Exhibitions, by Duncan Phillips . . . . . 244
Ecstasy, by Tack, *Illustration* . . . . . 245
Liberation, by Tack, *Illustration* . . . . . 246
The Whirligig of Taste, Reviewed by William M. Ivins . 251
Tree and Barn, by Tucker, *Illustration* . . . . . 257
Idyll of Tahiti, by Gauguin, *Illustration* . . . . . 258
Catalogue of Exhibitions . . . . . 259
The Open Road, by Marjorie Phillips, *Illustration* . . . 261
Cyclamen, by Weston, *Illustration* . . . . . 262
Index . . . . . 263



*Price Fifty Cents a Copy*
Published Twice a Year, March and November, by
PHILLIPS MEMORIAL GALLERY
1218 Connecticut Ave., Washington, D. C.
Duncan Phillips, *Editor*

MORRIS KANTOR

UNION SQUARE

# MODERN ART, 1930

BY

DUNCAN PHILLIPS

CONTEMPORARY art is keeping up with contemporary science in arousing and holding public attention no less than in making brilliant advances into hitherto unexplored regions of the mind. It is so intensely and so exuberantly alive that it quickens the pulse and adds zest to the practice and the criticism of art during this formative period. A literature of interpretation has grown up around the new aesthetic ideas and the new plastic creations. Art, in its present state of growth and change, is a topic for everyone's more or less excited consideration and opinion. As I write I live again in memory all the thrills of the epoch-making season of 1929-30 in New York with its succession of important events. About 1600 people each day, an average of over 3000 on Saturdays, and of 35,000 in three weeks, have visited the Museum of Modern Art to see its loan exhibition of Painting in Paris. The widespread interest of this affair was not in spite of but precisely because of the contemporaneous character of all the paintings and the controversial character of most of them. It is clear that the public is fascinated by the contemporaneous and the controversial in art. The curiosity of the mob which packed the celebrated Armory Show of 1913 was an entirely different manifestation. Serious interest could easily be read on the faces of these visitors of 1930 and the general behaviour of the crowd of last winter was surely respectful. There was little evidence of aggressive dislike and I observed no seeking for "sources of innocent merriment" as on former occasions of this kind. The exhibit was evidently regarded as a chance for serious study of the new art which is so rapidly crystallizing, which has passed from promise to achievement and about which so much has been written.

The fact is undeniable that the average visitor to a public

view of so-called modern pictures in New York today is no stranger to the latest of aesthetic idioms. It can no longer be said that America does not see the best of the European modernism nor can it be claimed that we are spared the excessive demonstrations of old world radicalism. Consequently the American public has become more or less habituated to the new language of design. Department store displays, magazine covers and advertising posters have been instrumental in changing our point of view. It appears that the American patron of art will soon require what he calls the "modern note" and will actually feel compelled to disapprove of whatever does not conform to it. It is no longer necessary to teach the layman that art is not the craft of accurate imitation of nature. He knows that nature is the source and the storehouse for the artist's creations, but that a painter's powers of invention are poor indeed if he leaves the world on his canvas exactly as the mirror would reflect it. There is more need already for reminding our gallery visitors and even our connoisseurs that the acceptance of what is new in art today does not require the rejection of what was new only yesterday.

This period in art has a sentiment for itself very like the sentiment which youth has always cherished for its own youthfulness and with the same sarcastic scorn for the tastes and opinions of its elders. "Modernity is the battle cry of our generation." I quote this sentence from one of the many books on one of the many experimental decorators of the School of Paris. It would almost seem as if there had never been so self-conscious and self-satisfied a period as ours. Yet every age no doubt preens itself and attitudinizes, if only for the sake of keeping up appearances. What I regard as special to our own conceit about ultra modern art is a certain very youthful bravado which regards with intolerance any survivals of art as it was before these new ideas came into it. This attitude no doubt is taken over from the world of science, where new concepts so often eclipse and make uncouth the conclusions of the past. In a hymn by

JOHN CONSTABLE

ON THE STOUR

J. B. CHARDIN

BOWL OF PLUMS

James Russell Lowell there is a stirring verse about the deliberate choice of *loneliness* a man must make to affirm the truth that is in him:

> Then it is the brave man chooses
> While the coward stands aside
> 'Til the multitude make virtue
> Of the faith they had denied.

It may not be long now before the multitude, in our largest centers of culture at least, will make virtue of their radicalism in art. Already the brave man's choice is to be true to himself even if it means to be unfashionable and neglected. Even today the self-styled modernists, contemporaneous to a fault, are not lonely at all in the choice they have made. They are in fact breathlessly followed and acclaimed. There is a precedent for their popularity. To what does our public passion for the latest mode correspond? Let us see. Those who would be known as modernists in art must account for and explain their following. Modernists of the past have never won fame and fortune. The great initiators and pioneers of art have stood alone, isolated and misunderstood except by the few who really counted and who made everything worthwhile. If schools were founded on their discoveries they knew nothing of it. Greco was considered crazy. When Rembrandt broke away from professional portrait painting he was despised and repudiated and only recognized as a great master after his death. Chardin retired into his humble home and there he painted what pleased him regardless of the fashions set by the Court for a rococo which was quite alien to his taste. Constable and Turner were modernists whose inventions and innovations, which anticipated both the personal liberties of Romanticism and the nature studies of Impressionism, were condemned and ridiculed. If they received praise during their lives it was for their occasional compromises with public taste and their sincere loyalty to great traditions. Daumier was the greatest modernist of them all. Space does not

permit my tribute to his pioneer courage. On the other hand many of the greatest painters have been powerful influences with the public of their time, have created a demand and immediately satisfied it, have set fashions and have founded Schools. I need only mention Giotto, Bellini, Leonardo, Giorgione, Raphael, Watteau, Reynolds and David. I need not bring up the less illustrious names, although I cannot resist mentioning among those who set fashions Gérôme and Sargent. And today the fashion setting leaders are Matisse, Picasso and Chirico. Their impetus started with Cézanne and Gauguin. Cézanne however was a real modernist who stood apart from and in advance of his time. It is Matisse and Picasso, following Gauguin, who are in step with it, as were Giotto, Giorgione, Raphael, Watteau, and the rest, supplying what the public has been made ready to demand. There are no doubt Cézannes of the future in our midst today. They are carrying on somewhere and somehow in obscurity or perhaps one admires them for the wrong reasons as was the case with Seurat. Let us beware lest those we call old-fashioned in subject or unconvincing in experiment should turn out to be the prophets of the future, the men of destiny.

The sudden reversal of taste in our period, the violent change of mode from Sargent to Picasso within fifteen years, is startling until we remember that there has been a steady stream of propaganda and publicity, the effects of which have been watched with keen intelligence until finally our deliciously shocked surmises and our subconscious expectations have been not only anticipated but produced at precisely the moment of our desire. At last we know what it is to be modern and what is to be our style for the first half of the Twentieth Century. Consciousness of a new style in art is like a child's consciousness of a new toy or a woman's awareness of a new gown or a man's of a new hat. Outfitted with a new mode in art, we find it difficult not to look upon those still satisfied with other styles as curiously old-fashioned. Art as it was before Matisse and Picasso is interesting only for the museum and its relics. The desire for a

stimulating change in the atmosphere of one's home and of one's mind has finally been implanted in us and made to appear as a positive human need. And it *is* a need, as so many habits have a way of becoming. I, for one, am often restless for a change in art and positively hungry for some new sensations of color or of pattern. Frankly, it delights me to encourage experiment and I derive more pleasure out of my experiment station than out of any other part of my work. The new interiors have cried out for a new kind of picture for the walls. A moderately stylized picture prepares the way and whets the appetite for a more radical one to keep it company. The new styles are grist for the conversational mill and this is by no means a trifling consideration. With those addicted to faddism art is more popular now than crossword puzzles were in their day. With those of us who pride ourselves on open-mindedness the incessant innovations in painting keep us actively entertaining new ideas and violently exercising our adaptabilities. With the artists who yearn to be in advance of their time there must be exasperation in the fact that their time and its public insists upon keeping up with them as they so desperately try to keep up with the resourcefully inventive Picasso. Modernism has become a "fait accompli." Only a short time ago I feared that the majority was being alienated by the uncompromising abstractions and eccentric cerebrations of very prominent artists and I predicted that a highly sophisticated class of period-conscious patrons might easily monopolize and dominate progressive artists and widen and deepen the gulf between art and the general public. I had not reckoned with the fame and fascination of the much adored heroes of the movement. Nor had I reflected on the rapidity with which new ideas spread and grow when the soil has been prepared over a wide area. If the time is approaching when conservative people actually see for themselves that the new systems and theories of design correspond with the modern mind, its researches and discoveries, then it will simply be a matter of standardizing as decoration the best

plastic patterns and of accepting as phenomena of genius the best pictorial supernaturalism.

Undeniably Picasso and Chirico are logical equivalents in art for the age which has produced Freud, Einstein and Spengler. As everyone knows who has studied the history of art as an evolution, the leaders of the advance are always attuned to the spirit of investigation in their time. This is especially true of those modernists who, not too far ahead of their public, do not "stand and wait" like the prophets but who collect around them other bold spirits to put in circulation a new coinage of ideas. It was so with Manet and Monet. Matisse and Picasso are today the corresponding leaders attuned to their time. And I rejoice that we live in an age when the multitude seems to be actually advancing in step with these leaders who represent in art the most recent investigations and researches. When concepts change with startling suddenness we can, I suppose, expect creative art to change with corresponding speed. Artists of the type I am now talking about are barometers of what is going on in the world. An age of innovations and inventions, of shifting codes, of revised mentality and morality, is of course a period of tremendous incentive to artists and devotees of art who live where the current of progress flows swiftest and feel its unrest. Now it is clear that we cannot live in the world today and escape from mechanism, collectivism, standardization, specialization and investigation of anything and everything which remains relatively unknown. Artists are therefore confronted with the hidden states of mind, the borderlands of reason and intuition, the mysteries of consciousness and subconsciousness, the psychic powers of the few, the unplumbed resources of electricity and chemistry, in short the control of mind over matter. The progressive artist feels impelled to take the curse off a period which, in its scientific and collectivistic trend, is headed in the opposite direction from the artist's ancient course, namely personal expression. He must make a grandiose, impersonal style out of the arrangement of mechanical

parts and their interdependence of function, their hardness of texture and their geometrical shapes. The authorities who support him must set a standard for collective taste and shepherd the usual flock of collective collectors. And so certain modes are being utilized and modified to specialities which the age seems to call for. The generalizing view has supplanted the particularizing. Synthesis has replaced analysis. Artists either work from nature towards geometry or starting from geometry return somewhat ponderously to nature. Just as modish art never quite becomes mathematics, so it never gets all the way back to humanity. Any art practiced on into our enlightened age which remains unaffectedly human and relating to life without any theorem or diagram, without any allegiance to abstraction or supernaturalism, is, I regret to say, shrugged at as old-fashioned.

The artist who is recognized as up-to-date wears one of three uniforms and King Pablo wears them all according to his whim. There is the neo-primitive mode, made popular by a real primitive, Henri Rousseau. It is only becoming to other real primitives and its adoption by the ultra sophisticates is falling out of favor. As for the "peintres de dimanches," the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker, who sell their wares on the street corners, their funny little pictures simply reveal by contrast the genius of good old Rousseau, whose innate feeling for color and design and vivid reaction to life started the craze for childlike frankness and untrained naïveté. More imposing is the appearance of the modern artist who wears the stiff old garments of the formalist, abstractionist, or whatever else he may like to call himself, as he denies self and glorifies system. These artists are the aesthetes of today, and so stylish they are that they might suffer the fate of fashion plates and seem simply quaint to their own children.

Sometimes there is a great decorator, a man of true genius, who wears these garments as if he had been born to them. Such a man is Braque, a distinguished designer if ever there was one,

whose every caprice of manner is courtly, who wears formal dress with the distinguished ease and the charming grace one likes to associate with aristocracy in sport clothes. One or two general principles of design, such as the all-over pattern and the construction of forms in space under architectural inspiration, are maintained and they succeed in making the formalists of our period more intelligently conscious of their function as artists than were the illustrators and the imitators of the Nineties and at the turn of the century. But whereas all artists have learned these truths they have not paraded in them and covered up with such correct garments their lack of personalities and ideas to go under the clothes. Less popular than the formalists, because less adaptable to applied art and interior decoration, are those who qualify to pass through the world causing everywhere a big thrill and a little shudder in the sinister role of supernaturalist. They make us aware of magic, but not in nature and not in ordinary human experience, only in abnormal psychology, in dislocated dream images and in various disorders of subconscious life. Metaphysical concepts are embodied pictorially. Soothsayers are once again needed. Both formalists and supernaturalists often produce inventions which beguile us for hours at a time and occasionally refer to our actual experiences in ways which startle us into sudden respect and a more sympathetic attention. For instance I have just acquired for my pictorial laboratory a dark and vivid canvas by Morris Kantor entitled, "Union Square."* It depicts the agitated state of mind of one who lives in that crowded and confused section of New York. The street lamps, the lighted windows, and an equivalent for the racket and the roar of the outside world impinge upon the artist's seclusion and break through the walls of his studio until consciousness is all agog as in a dream and the relief of expression becomes a cubist problem with the parts to be put together again, as an architect builds rather than as a realist imitates. The result is beautiful in tone and pattern and

*See page 130.

PAUL CÉZANNE

MONT ST. VICTOIRE

PIERRE BONNARD

PLAZA DEL POPOLO

not at all chaotic or disturbing in effect. Order has been brought out of the chaos of an all too familiar modern experience. The order tells about the chaos but presides over it and converts it into style. I have also been attracted lately by the lively pictures of Stuart Davis, who improvises with linear perspectives and color schemes and reveals a kinship to the improvising virtuoso, Picasso. That colossus bestrides both camps, inspiring imitators either to look up at his pose as a formalist of quite formidable power or to guess at his meaning as a supernaturalist most strangely disturbing. Picasso is making history —breaking precedents every day. There is no doubt at all of his genius. The only doubt is in regard to the results of his influence.

With such a glorious adventurer making front page publicity for art in season and out of season, it is tempting to believe that our age is suddenly of rather transcendent importance in its aesthetic creations and that we who are busy in this world are important, too; that if we pay rich tribute to the period we can share in its power and glory. Our parents however belonged to a less enlightened time. Any painter working in a style which is neither formalist nor supernaturalist nor sensationally new is today as one buried alive. Cézanne was useful for a while. Now he is in the words of Leo Stein "a squeezed lemon." What matters it to us if Bonnard, like Cézanne, belongs to the ages?* The New York dealers, repeating propaganda from Parisian dealers, pronounce that he is not of the hour. The prescribed uniforms of the faith are not of course required from artists of the more or less remote past. If, however, a living painter is by turn of mind or by habit of vision imbued with even the best qualities of the generation which preceded his own, then he is what we revolted against. We can treat him with condescension only. If, living on into our time, an artist is yet so oblivious to the spirit of our age as to still be a sensitive lyricist, affected by light and atmospheric colors, using these as instru-

*Meier-Graefe, Eli Faure, Roger Fry, Clive Bell, Felix Feneon, Leon Werth, and many others, have declared that Bonnard is one of the two or three finest living artists. I am told that Matisse is of the same opinion.

ments of emotional expression, then, for the sake of progress, he must be denounced as vague, soft, over-refined, a sensualist and a false prophet of escape from the hard facts of modern life. No matter how original such great individualists as Bonnard and John Marin may be, how rare and inimitable their vision, how subtle and sure their intuition and awareness of nature, how incommunicable the secret of their touch, there is no sympathy for such individualism and for such independence as they display. John Marin blows through the world of modern art like a strong bracing wind from the sea or the mountains but he requires from the beholder an intuition like his own and an apprehension of the elemental which transcends school and dogma. Such an artist as Pierre Bonnard sees the world as no one ever saw it before, with a magic which cannot be charted and which cannot even be felt if one has no share at all in such rare endowment of vision, such genius for inspired relations of color. And so I say that these masters and other men such as Tack in his latest, most stirring color progressions are not topical artists for the multitude. They are more difficult for the American connoisseur than the most cerebral Picasso or Leger. Why? Because they require sensibility for color, which is, as yet, undeveloped in this country, and because they are far in advance of their time. They are the genuine modernists who dare to be different from the mode of the moment, men who are altogether inimitable, and who, for that reason, will found no Schools and create no collective art. The future, however, may belong to them. The time element will surely come into painting and with it a renewed reverence for those painters who can move men to ecstasy and vision through their divine control of the emotional potentialities of light and color.

# ART AND THE INTERNATIONAL MIND

WE wish to take this opportunity of thanking the hundreds of hitherto unknown friends who have written letters of generous and glowing commendation after reading our first number of ART AND UNDERSTANDING. For their approval and the kindly expression of it we are grateful. We now feel sustained in the belief that there is need for and appreciation of a magazine which interprets the art of the present as it relates to the past and as it leads on into the future. We feel too that such a periodical must be entirely disinterested and independent of all cliques and organizations; that it must on the one hand moderate its trend to open mindedness with a stern passion for sincerity, integrity and truth, and on the other, that it must temper its personal preferences with a tolerant appreciation of different points of view. It must, above all other considerations, relate art to life, referring it back to nature, and dedicating it resolutely to the making of an international mind and to those universal values which survive our changing boundaries, policies, fashions and opinions. Unfortunately we must discontinue the magazine during 1930-31 in order to finance the publication of our long promised volume, to which we are definitely committed, "The Artist Sees Differently," which is to be illustrated profusely with all of the greatest and most of the latest paintings in the Phillips Memorial Gallery. There may also be a Handbook of the Collection issued for general use. The nation-wide approval however of ART AND UNDERSTANDING encourages us to carry on with it at the earliest possible moment. And in the fall of 1931 we hope to solicit and secure the support we need to resume this magazine and to make it fill a unique place in the spiritual and cultural life of our country.

We wish to express our sympathetic interest and endorsement of certain proposals which have been made in pursuance of our ideals. I have seen *a pact, prepared at the instigation of Nicholas Roerich,*

*which would place art and its universal language above and beyond the disputes of nations and protect artistic treasures in times of madness and of strife through an international agreement to raise above museums, art galleries and cathedrals an international flag, claiming and receiving the same immunity as the flag of the Red Cross.* That surely is a step in the right direction. Whether or not such a flag would provide safety from long distance guns and from aerial bombs is a question open to some doubt. There could, however, be no doubt at all that such a banner would be a constant reminder of the universal brotherhood of men everywhere and of the creative spirit which unites them by natural bonds of fellow feeling. We also support the suggestion, already carried out through his own beneficence by the Hon. Vincent Massey in the Canadian Legation in Washington, that *each nation should acquire for its embassies or legations abroad paintings and other works of art by its contemporary artists.* This plan would not only afford support for native art and recognition of art's importance as a diplomatic agency, but the vast system of aesthetic exchange thus organized would inevitably lead to world-mindedness and a world-wide knowledge of racial character and culture. Attachés should be appointed to interpret the art of the countries whence they come to the countries to which they are accredited.

Finally we propose that the government of the United States, which has at last declared that war is outlawed and no longer an instrument of its national policy, shall instruct its representatives at home and abroad to think and act in a spirit consistent with a state of civilization to which war is obsolete barbarism, and that it shall, in that spirit, change the name of what must be its most practical service on behalf of the maintenance of order and of peace, from the War Department to the Department of National Defense. D. P.

EDOUARD VUILLARD

THE NEWSPAPER

# ART AND THE BUSINESS MAN

BY

CHARLES LAW WATKINS

I NEVER step into the world of art without the feeling that I have arrived in a Looking-Glass Land just a little more perplexing than Alice's. The guide posts to the same place all point in different directions. Many of the figures along the way are as grotesque as those in a Nice carnival. There are no laws, no traffic officers, no courts of last resort, and no acknowledged ruler. The population is a mixed salad, though in it one may perceive three distinct groups: first, the artists—some of whom are several thousand years old; second, the laymen, of your age and mine, who are enjoying themselves immensely; and third, the critics and teachers who hover between the laymen and the artists. Some of the critics carry clear-vision lenses which they courteously offer to the laymen so that they may see better without preconceptions. Others, full of authority, take off their own spectacles and insist that you look through them at everything in the world of art. Now and then one deftly opens an artist's skull and fills it full of his own ideas.

How does the business man find his way about in this fantastic region? He is no stranger to it. In fact he pays the taxes that keep the artists' universe intact. And every now and then some financier adds his masterly touch of whimsy by marching in with a check for as much as a million dollars, going out proudly with a bit of ancient canvas. This strange sphere rolls along with our own workaday world, but just a little apart from it, like the fourth dimensional region conceived by H. G. Wells. We slip easily from one sphere to another. Thousands of business and professional men do it, finding diversion and happiness in it, and, as trophies of their expeditions, have surrounded themselves in their homes with most significant trifles —etchings, watercolors, canvases, small bronzes.

One cannot help wondering what there may be in the plastic

arts that so interests the practical mind, and inevitably one tries to analyze those qualities which have made so many business men such keen judges of pictures and sculpture. The simplest reason for their interest occurs first: the walls of a home call for decoration and there is nothing more natural than to want to know something about the objects which surround one in daily life. It is more likely however that the universal fascination in looking at pictures has much deeper roots. The compelling interest may be the close link between art and life throughout history.

In every picture can be traced the means of satisfying a human need. The drawings of animals scratched on the walls of pre-historic caves were probably an attempt to relieve the boredom of bleak seasons when there was no hunting. The need of diversion continues through time, and the more feverish the pace of work and play the more gratefully do hard-driven people turn to the arts. Art also is linked to life through religion. Very ancient masks and idols were the aboriginal artist's answer to man's need to formalize his religious instincts. They were inspired by the same fears and aspirations which caused the Church to commission the painting of the Sistine Madonna and the Last Judgment. Many pictures and statues are the artist's own voice in worship. As families grew into tribes, and tribes into nation, history began to be made and history had to be written. Heroic deeds were done, great chiefs ruled, and their triumphs had to be perpetuated in man's memory. The sculptor and painter were called on—and are still called on—for the scribe has never completely satisfied the need for heroic commemoration. Another link of life and art is the longing to preserve the likeness of beloved people. Portraiture is almost as old as art itself. The paintings of landscapes and still life are a more modern development, but they too spring from a human need growing from an advancing civilization. As a result of many centuries of mental refinement we have become conscious of an aesthetic sense. Its manifestation is a desire to have a few

objects around us which have no usefulness of any kind—whose only excuse for existence is their beauty.

It is the more acute development of this aesthetic sense that has opened the door to modernist art. It seems to me that the outstanding and essential characteristic of modernist art is the loss of interest in the subject matter of a picture and the almost fanatical interest in the various methods of seeing and painting. In the past the most we asked of artists was that they should not destroy our conception of the beauty of familiar things. Today we demand that the artists originate beauty on their own account. Usually they take nature as a starting point. By eliminating, reshaping, rearranging, and stylizing, they finally bring into the world something creative and with a life of its own. This we are willing to judge, not from the representational standpoint but for the abstract interest of the design, the music of the color and the mood or emotion it may evoke in us. We do not ask for the model to see if the representation is correct but we do put it to a hundred far more severe tests involving textures, rhythms, spatial intervals, balances of form and color, movement of lines and directions of planes. We have learned that all these are aesthetic elements which can make a picture of absorbing interest as an experience of the beautiful even when independent of subject matter. Time alone will tell whether the ablest of the contemporary modernists are the giants they seem to their admirers and press agents. Meanwhile they are making the art of painting very exciting. They have changed art galleries into places of debate and often of stimulating experience.

There is another thing about the art of painting which alone could and should arouse an undying interest in it on the part of every normal person. The scope of painting has no boundaries except those imposed by the skill and imagination of the artist himself. Within the small portion of infinite space lying back of the surface of the canvas the painter can place anything in this world—or out of it. He can paint Heaven or Hell, as many of the primitives loved to do; he can try to paint God, as did

Michel Angelo; he can paint carrots and radishes or bring back Venus or the Valkyries; he can even create, as I have said, a world of his own in which there are no recognizable shapes and forms. His best-loved achievements, however, have ever been the transcendent painting of familiar scenes with human figures. By transcendent we mean their re-creation nearer to the heart's desire or their representation with some universal significance which the artist was the first to perceive. Their summons to the imagination, the reaction to which is sometimes called Escape, may be the essential magic in pictures.

Probably the greatest thing that any picture can give the beholder, however, is a pleasurable or deep emotion that has no literary or intellectual attribute whatever. Sometimes it is simply a quiet sense of well-being which comes from the contemplation of any work that is perfectly performed, but now and again some masterpiece will give that strange thrill which comes only when we see a manifestation of human activity that is inspired by a force that is more than human. An act of sublime sacrifice, a gesture of great kindness, a sentence voicing a godlike thought, will give us the same thrill. The greatest paintings are among these inspired deeds of greatly gifted human beings, deeds of which we feel ourselves incapable, but which we can respond to emotionally because we are at least sufficiently endowed to understand them. There is nothing so fascinating as the search for these rare manifestations of skill and vision which are something more than human.

If in any of these conjectures—or in all of them together—we have accounted for the interest of practical people in pictorial art, then we come to the consideration of the business and professional man as a critic and patron of contemporary painting. It is a cause of general congratulation that so many of them no longer feel required by a sense of dignity and conservatism to confine their selections, under professional guidance, to the old masters.

Creative imagination is such a common characteristic of the

American business man that we are likely to be blind to some of its most important expressions. We are accustomed to marvel at the miracles of invention in transportation, communication, and housekeeping, but have we stopped to wonder at the miracle of Availability? How many flashes of imaginative thought had to be captured and harnessed before it could be true that, by a telephone call, we can arrange the prompt delivery on our doorstep of fresh fruit from California, meat from Chicago, or secure from Pittsburgh a device to automatically control the heat of our houses, or from Schenectady a contraption to pop our toast, done a golden brown, almost into our hand at the breakfast table? It took creative imagination to manufacture these things at marketable prices, to inform the country of their existence, to distribute them to fifty thousand convenient counters where our demand can be supplied five minutes after we conceive it.

The artist, the critic and the dealer may well take into account both the imagination and the capacity for sentiment inherent in the business man. This last quality is revealed in that much lampooned institution, the Rotary Club, where emotions may be of the herd and on the surface, yet fine, sincere emotions none the less. The business man then is bringing imagination and sentiment with him when he comes to look at pictures. What the museum director and critic can do is to help him refine his sensibilities by bringing him in contact with all kinds of sincere painting, old and new, to the end that his native capacity for appreciation be exercised with discrimination. The business man is keen and often searching in his criticism, and we must reckon with an easily recognized ability he has to perceive honest workmanship and balanced organization. He has an eye trained to see through bluff and bunk. He is using a mind accustomed to simplicity and direct expression. Trained to efficient procedure he wants no voluminous record where a few shorthand notes will do. On the other hand he will not tolerate evasions and oblique suggestions where he believes

there should be conscientious detail and clear statements of fact. Although nonplussed for a while by radical changes he should be and he often is unafraid of originality, having learned to seek for it as the only means of his own economic survival. It is even possible that in some cases he is too susceptible to innovations in art. He finds them diverting and he is able and willing to speculate on their future. When we find him today conforming to a fashion for radicalism, we realize that his innate conformity to a general trend often exceeds his conservatism.

On one point he stumbles and, in so doing, passes by or condemns too hastily many important canvases. That point is color. Color is unquestionably similar to musical sound in its capacity to give pleasure to highly sensitized persons. One perceives both color and sound through the vibrations of a sensory organ. Those of us who remember how long it took us to accustom our ears to the classics in music cannot expect that we can grasp on the instant all the subtler harmonies in color. We stand before some of the masterpieces of color organization with no more idea of what is going on than we had the first time we listened to Debussy. Color by itself and independent of any object represented in a picture is the source of pleasure or displeasure to the eye that has learned to follow the pattern as the ear follows the pattern of a symphony. Taste in color is of course peculiarly personal and it develops with intimate personal experience. It is a deep, mysterious subject. All one can say about it is that the appreciation of color comes to receptive people through practice in looking for it both in pictures and in nature, no matter what they may believe of color theories. It is astonishing how much color we fail to see unless we concentrate upon it.

If an American renaissance is under way, as so many think, it will be the first renaissance of art under a widespread democratic patronage. This means that the business man—and his wife—will have a great deal to do with steering the course of American painting. Their influence should, in the course of time,

favor the cultivation of strong and sincerely independent work. A wise note of caution is contained in Duncan Phillips' appreciative comment on the business mind in its relation to the fine arts: "Although influenced, naturally enough, by waves of public opinion and new fashions in art, and too much inclined to listen to dealers and other self-constituted authorities on market values, he is nevertheless bound by his ancient code of individualism and self-reliance to respect and require these qualities in the artist. If he sees evidences of unavoidable standardization he will be all the more certain to demand that the standard shall be sound and high." The patron of practical mind, with his capacity for estimating and developing the full possibilities of all fields of human endeavor, is likely to be a harder taskmaster than were the art patrons of any preceding generation.

# LIVING WITH PICTURES

BY

CHARLES DOWNING LAY

IT is probable that I am a collector for the same reason that I am a blonde. I was born that way. The reason why I collect pictures more than other things is that pictures are for me the most pleasing and the most exciting things in the world.

The son of a painter who collected pictures, early American furniture and almost any object of art or luxury, it was natural for me to enjoy collecting and the curatorship of collections. Most of my father's things were, because of a death-bed wish, put in my care, and he told me the secret of success in collecting, which I have passed on to my children but cannot divulge here. I have memories of going with my father in a neighbor's two-horse wagon to clear the attic of a farmhouse of its maple desks and low-boys, gate-legged tables and other dilapidated furniture. A cherished possession is a newel back arm chair (rocker) which my father bought in Lyme and carried home on his back when he was in his teens.

Being known as a collector, one acquires things easily. I once called on an old English friend of my father's. He had been a tea taster in China and was visiting in New York. He said, "You like Chinese porcelains?" "Yes," said I. "Well," said he, "I am going to leave you all of mine." And he did.

A childhood spent in the studio, where I came to know many painters by sight and by reputation, followed by a college course in architecture, seemed to cure me of a possible inherited itch to paint, but I believe it is really incurable for it broke out in a virulent form at about the age of forty, since when I have sought the company of painters, I have painted in every spare moment, and I have, of course, collected pictures in every medium. One cannot be a friend of a painter and not like his work, and a person with the collecting habit cannot like things coldly but must, if possible, possess them.

It is none of my doing, but the inevitable result of hereditary qualities developed in a grateful environment, that makes me delight in visual experiences; that makes my visual experiences emotional experiences. Other people are not so. Their emotional reactions to things seen are intellectual, or sensuous, or auditory. The eye is for them merely a transmitter of information which may become an idea, or a sound, or a sensuous perception, as in reading poetry or reading music; or it may report facts of the world outside which stimulate action. So far as I have been able to learn the emotional reactions of the painter to visual experiences are unknown to many people. This is not to say that they do not get pleasure and emotional reactions when looking at pictures. Some people are deeply moved by the symbol of the immaculate conception, while painters may be moved by pictures which intellectually mean nothing to them. There are few people who can get any idea from an Egyptian picture except perhaps that Rameses II is shown victorious; yet the picture may be the source of great emotional delight.

It is difficult and dangerous to talk about the emotions, particularly so when the emotion of beauty is concerned, but I have thought that the pictures which appeal to me do so through the perfection of their organization, so that they seem, like ourselves, to be living. At any rate they have for me a life giving, life enhancing quality. I cannot myself live without pictures that I like, and I could not live with pictures that I do not like, and I must live with pictures all the time.

Objects of luxury, ornamental bijoux, are to me merely sensuous delights—well enough and agreeable but not to be compared to the delight in pictures which satisfy the deeper hunger of the soul.

It may be possible to suggest means of increasing the pleasure in pictures, as the result of my own experience.

In the home, pictures should be moved frequently. They must not be allowed to become as familiar in certain positions as the

mantlepiece, but must be changed to new positions where they will at first surprise and then interest; an old picture in a new position seems to be a new picture and offers new delights. There is another advantage in moving pictures about, especially modern pictures which are brightly colored and are easily changed in appearance by more or less light or by the color of surrounding objects. There are pictures which look better in a strong light and others which look better on the darker side of the room.

It is often possible and quite easy to change pictures in the frames without removing the frames from the wall. If you have, for instance, two canvases, 20 x 24, they can take turns in the same frame, for it seems to me that all frames in a room should harmonize with the room. It would be better, therefore, to buy pictures without frames and buy the frames afterwards to suit the position where they are to hang. Not all pictures are interchangeable in gold frames, for some of them require a cool gold and are injured by a warmer gold and the reverse.

Water colors can be matted to fit one frame, which may have a panel or button back. The water color in its mat can then be easily put in or taken out of the frame. A large collection is thus easy to store in portfolios. The mats should be of the standard size, 14¼ x 19¼.

Unless some such scheme is adopted a small collection will soon be too large for a small house. No real collector is willing to be limited by the available wall space, nor is he willing to crowd the pictures on the walls. He may wish also to keep something in reserve; not showing all his treasures at once.

It is a pleasure to me to have pictures not always hung but standing for a time on bookcases, on bureaus or tables, or even on the foot of the bed.

My pictures, whether drawings, etchings, lithographs, water colors or oil paintings, are almost all contemporary American, though I have a weakness for early portraits.

There has been some romance in my collecting but few ad-

ventures. I have never found a masterpiece in an attic, and I have bought few things which I regret. The regrets are all of things which I did not buy. All of Charles Keene's drawings were on sale in New York in, perhaps, 1895. I was tempted nearly to the breaking point by them, but early training made it possible for me to resist, which I have always regretted. So much for virtue!

I feel sure that the extravagances of the present will never be regretted, for the pictures will be pictures when the automobiles are dust. They have all been bought when it would have been more seemly to buy necessities (as they are called) or more prudent to buy securities. But the people who live on the seacoast of Bohemia always prefer luxuries to necessities and are willing for the sake of today's satisfactions to chance tomorrow's showers.

# TERMS WE USE IN ART CRITICISM

## Modern

MODERN is only a chronological word. Even in the language of art criticism it is the opposite of ancient. Its meaning is conditioned by time and the effects of time on opinion. What is modern today will be ancient tomorrow, at least from the altered perspective of the Twenty-fifth Century. Obviously a word which concerns itself only with what can be computed in time must not be used as a critical adjective which claims to sum up a mixed lot of qualities constituting an artistic style. The confusion produced by the many-mindedness of even ultra-modern art is worse confounded by the carelessness with which the critics call modern not only whatever is practiced in a strange variety of current modes but whatever was done in anticipation of all these modes by artists of a past more or less remote. The truth is there have always been men of experimental minds whom we propose to designate as *modernists*, men unwilling and unable to be bound by ready made formulae or to sink their individual genius in academic traditions.

We cannot say when modernist art began but it goes back to the very beginning of man as a sensitive, differentiating and rebellious individual. Modern art, on the other hand, simply means art that is relatively recent. Just where ancient art ends and modern art begins depends chiefly on the date of the historian and his trend of thought. The boundary between ancient and modern would naturally tend to move forward with each successive generation of those who narrate man's story; yet it also depends upon the historian's whim and the thesis which dominates his outline of influences and events. Thus the boundary is not only a matter of changing perspective but of changing critical computation. For some writers modern art begins with Giotto, while for others the date of its birth is as late as

GEORGES BRAQUE

ABSTRACT STILL LIFE

PER KROHG

THE BLACKSMITH

the French Revolution. If regretfully we must admit the difficulty of agreement on a boundary line between the old and the new in art, the more positively do we hold that there should be a universal acceptance of the idea that the word modernist should replace the word modern for such art as dares to be in advance of its time since the word modern can have a chronological meaning only. Its use as a description of any special kind of vision or any special order of design must be condemned as carelessness of thought and language.

### Modernist

Modernist is a critical term, the opposite of academic. There have always been modernists to complain because there have always been academicians to lay down the law, to require conformity and to despise innovation. Modernism defines a state of mind in art more than any definite method of procedure. As a matter of fact it can and should be applied to so many different kinds of technique that it loses most of its value as a critical category. Its reference is to one and only one sort of human character. It stands for the progressive and challenging type of person in the art of any age from the pre-historic to the contemporary. It is logical to look for the sources of the latest ideas in man's earliest efforts either to represent or to decorate somewhat differently from what was called for by tribal decree or prohibited by tribal taboo. Modernists are those adventurers who, dissatisfied with old forms for new ideas and emotions, make their own aesthetic language to convey their desire for identification with the current of change, the evolution of what has been into what will be by the grace of God and their own invention. It is applicable to as many different kinds of experimental methods as have been devised by experimental minds in successive periods. Modernism means different things at different times. Thus the Romanticists, now so demoded and lonely on their museum walls, were the modernists of their day, as were in turn the Realists and the Impressionists. Once upon a

time, when formalism hung heavy on the land, to be a modernist meant to be a faithful student of nature like John Constable and much later Claude Monet. But when this nature study had been completed and a slavish imitation of natural appearance became the academic law, then modernists returned to the formalism their ancestors had despised. Regardless of the "whirligig of taste" and the complete difference of outlook boasted by the modernists of later days, all those who were modernists in the past are entitled to keep that honor always on the pages of history. This does not mean that they will at all times give pleasure and it is only when they stir the mind or heart that they truly live. A style in art is, therefore, apt to hibernate and to blossom again, although not at all with the inevitable regularity of the seasons.

Obviously, then, the various styles of art which at one time or another are modernist cannot be particularized by a general term so elastic as to apply to all the antithetical phases of changing experiment. We must see to it that our clarifications define more clearly the character of each specialized effort. Classicist, Romanticist, Impressionist,* Expressionist,* are all excellent. Abstractionist would have been more inclusive and more precise than Cubist.* There have always been abstractionists just as there have always been realists. And by turns the champions of one or the other of these conceptions have been the modernists of their time by reason of having been the rebels, the outsiders. A modernist is an individual or a member of an embattled group who is at war with collective and organized expression and the tyranny of tradition. Unfortunately the isolation, and even the independence, does not last very long, for when the battle is won and conservative criticism has become favorable the academy takes notice, the public is conciliated, and modernism is at an end. But that is another story.

Modernism is as old as the first discontent with the lazy in-

*For interpretations of Impressionist, and its opposites, Expressionist and Cubist, read ART AND UNDERSTANDING for November, 1929, pages 60 to 70 inclusive, in the chapter entitled "The Many Mindedness of Modern Painting."

clination of human nature to let well enough alone. From the first its function has been to reinvigorate creative effort with new ideas and as long as human nature needs to be so prodded the modernist will do the right thing as the occasion requires. Since we hold that the chronological word modern means the opposite of ancient and the critical word modernist the opposite of academic, and that both academic and modernist mean different methods at different times, it follows that we realize the need for a specific nomenclature to particularize all our various new contributions to artistic expression. Let the terms we invent for our formal patterns, our simplifications, our metaphysical concepts of space, our "stream-of-consciousness" images, our supernaturalism be as simple, as free from arrogance and affectation, and as expressive of our exact notions as we can possibly make them. Time has a way of dealing with theories, fads and fashions without much indulgence, and phrases which once were portentous, are ultimately forgotten.

## Modernistic

Modernistic is a critical term of reproach, bearing the same relation to modernist that pseudo-classic bears to classic or pseudo-scientific to scientific. In fact the pseudo-classic and the pseudo-scientific types make up the bulk of modernistic bluff and bluster. A modernistic person is an affected one who cares more for the show than the substance and who will follow a fashion meekly and obey a formula to the letter without once feeling a genuine emotion for the new idea which alone would make such conduct tolerable. Modernistic painters of the shrewd and highly respectable kind imitate the mannerisms of a great modernist like Cézanne and in time acquire such proficiency in the superficial use of his method that they attain to an air of facility and success in popularizing the mode for the market by sweetening it with sentimentality or normalizing it to the view of the average person. When they do it well enough the academy recognizes that the idea of the once despised mod-

ernist can now be given the sanction of its institution and modernistic manufacturers in good standing are set up for profitable business. Modernistic also are the "strictly dishonorable" extremists who paint or carve with their tongues in their cheeks and with a deliberate purpose of causing a scandal, of being always a step or two in advance of any one else, of "trying a new one," for example, drawing one face over another, as a prominent painter is now doing. Next year there will be a new crop of practical jokes. The practical joker always has to maintain his reputation. But the less said about such seekers of publicity the better. Whether the conservative ones try to conciliate the academy and the museum trustees or the radical ones to please the faddists and the collectors of new sensations, they are in either case superficial persons and curiously untroubled by conscience.

## Archaic

Archaic is a critical term. Although we think of it as characterizing an art of remote antiquity it is applicable to any youthful, vigorous art which is self reliant and not too cultivated and which springs spontaneously and with the utmost sincerity from the aspiring inner life of a civilization still on the upward climb to the heights of a great ideal and a distinctive aesthetic style. Archaic art is apt to be sculptural and architectural. Whether or not it produces great sculpture or architecture, its artistic expression in any medium is usually ennobled with a builder's conscience for sound structure which adapts form to function, which seeks the underlying character of a motive with a fine simplicity and essentialism and which never consciously exercises either a sensuous or a personal appeal. We find that we are describing the archaic artist of all time in words we recently selected to suggest the rugged honesty and unpolished grandeur of Cézanne. And indeed this *modernist* painter is typically archaic, even as the archaic Egyptians and Greeks and Byzantines and early Italians, notably Giotto, were mod-

ernists at the time when they were hewing and sketching their ideas for a collective symbolical expression.

The words however are by no means interchangeable, for it is quite the usual thing in antique civilizations to produce an archaic art which is almost academic in its adherence to rules and conventions and simply vital in spite of it. On the other hand modernists are usually non-conformists and often appear in the midst of an eclectic decadence which is the antithesis of the state of civilization associated with archaic art. There is therefore an inconsistency in the reverence which modernists of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries feel for aesthetic archaism. The archaic unquestionably implies Authority and a Collective Ideal hostile to individualistic experiment and innovation. Nevertheless the two qualities which our best modernists seek for their work in the hope of making with such fundamentals a great and serious style of their own are simplification and structural integrity, and these qualities form the very foundations of the archaic edifice.

### Archaistic

Archaistic is a critical term to describe that adoption of archaic simplicity and conventionalized form which artists of antiquarian culture or exotic taste assume to express their discontent with the artistic idioms of their own period. Often we find archaistic stylization in modern art which is essentially sincere and of a ripe and mellow scholarship. It is not fair to impute affectation to all modern work done after an ancient manner. There are many artists of the utmost honesty who are being true to themselves in their allegiance to a craftsmanship invented and practiced in remote antiquity. They are the men unhappily born out of their due time. A lack of originality is the only charge we can bring against them. Such painters as Gauguin, on the other hand, were not only sincere in their archaistic expression but poignantly original in the use they made of archaic simplifications and conventions. They are pro-

nounced romanticists who miss being archaic by reason of looking backward instead of forward, with a wistful yearning for qualities lacking in their world. The genuinely archaic modernists are those who aspire to classic finalities and seek to attain to these with the language of their own period. The pseudo-primitive or pseudo-savage imitators put on an archaic manner as they would put on a costume in a masquerade. Such a pose is often a passing phase in the development and the artistic education of truly important artists.

### Classic

A critical term. In a sense the classic is the goal, the ultimate destination of all Style that is in the making. When any style achieves to an unalterable perfection we say that it is classic—meaning that there is nothing more to be said, that it can take its place among the finished achievements of man's creative faculties. This finality however of the classic work of art has a more specific character which is implicit and of its very essence. It is a matter of poised elements, of formal relations which seem to have been determined from the beginning of the world, subsequently lost or confused perhaps in the chaos of conflicting circumstances but finally rediscovered and resolved by the intellect of the artist and given an eternal life in some aesthetic pattern, whether of word, material structure, sound, or plastic image. We associate the classic quality with the perfected consummation of supreme periods of artistic skill and widespread civilization; and we somehow enshrine the idea in the concept of antiquity and more specifically of ancient Greece. Yet it is just as much of a possibility for today and for tomorrow and for our own country, whichever it may be. Are we to be any less concerned with rhythm, order and balance and with the subordinate requirements of indivisible and incorruptible Unity?

The danger of classicism is of course self satisfaction and the formulation of what was originally inspired intuition into a

ANDRÉ DERAIN

A BRUNETTE

set of rules for any properly conducted intellect. Thus its perfect proportions are worked into a code which becomes the law for little minds, causing them to mistake the letter for the spirit and to deceive themselves with the folly that classic beauty may be produced at will by the application of industry and the adoption of fixed standards for acceptable procedure. When the Academy has placed its trade-mark on a classic order of design the classic spirit has already fled, having eluded the pack of its pursuers and entered into the archaic striving of those unafraid of change and eager to build on firm foundations more new and stately mansions for the soul.

### Romantic

A critical term. It is the opposite of classic in that it denotes the free play of imagination impatient of restraint and rules. The classic artist is content to work within well known bounds and imposes on his inventions a rigorous discipline and the canons of sound tradition. A classic picture is self-sufficient. It is a cosmos in itself, regulated by the rhythm of all life and so integrated as a unit that it only suggests and never insists upon the continuation of its rhythm outside of its frame. A romantic picture on the other hand seems eager to appear as only a fragment of a universal cosmos perpetually changing and in the midst of a drama or a dream of peace, to either of which it refers with passionate feeling. As Virgil Barker wrote of the romanticism of A. P. Ryder "the quietest of his pictures, whether of idyllic, pastoral or ghostly return from the tomb are the most romantic for when the substance of his dream became more restless and wild he unconsciously ordered the component forms so that the rhythm returned upon itself, stabilizing the eye and poising the mind in the midst of the turmoil. Over all the romanticism of subject which made him in his conscious mind a complete romanticist, Ryder was triumphantly classic in his control and in the grand structural unity of his designs. This unconscious classicism, directing and restraining a romantic imagination

without ever depriving it of its fervour and freedom of spirit, accounts not only for the greatness of Ryder but of Rembrandt and Daumier and many others of the world's greatest artists. But not all romanticism is thus controlled and the romantic quality in art devotes lines which burst their boundaries, surprising us with capricious whims of composition. The picture is only a sample of a whole world conceived in that spirit of individual imagination and sensibility. The subject or substance is of profound importance since it produces the dynamic, the inspirational motive power. In some romantic pictures the escape from reality is pronounced. In others the romance of reality is made clear and of direct emotional significance. The temperament of the artist, each one a law to himself, is a controlling factor which will not and cannot be denied. If art is ultimately emotional expression, then the closed and compact symmetry of classicism will not correspond to many states of mind, and the romantic must ever be one of the fundamental, the universal and the eternal points of view.

## Baroque

Baroque is here proposed as a critical term instead of a chronological category. A baroque work of art is a pattern before it is a painting, a sculpture or a building. It derives its character from a single minded absorption of the artist in elaborating and enlarging a technical unity of method and unit of design. Unfortunately we may have come to associate the word with an extravagance of artificial shapes or with forms and colors kept in perpetual motion. These are phases of bad baroque. It is possible to be classic or romantic, realist or abstractionist, impressionist or expressionist in a baroque way. That simply means the way of the *all over* pattern. But is not that a fundamental law of design? Would it not make all good artists baroque? Not at all. For it is one thing to be aware of one's need for unity and consistency and quite another to care so much for these qualities that a subject or a picture is only a pretext

for the exercise of unity and consistency as ends in themselves. It is one thing to be a good skater or dancer and quite another to skate or dance professionally. A principle of classic proportion can be carried to a degree of aesthetic piety where it dominates one's behaviour, like the strict observance of a ritual. The opposite principle of romantic abandon, in a wild escape from bounds and proprieties, can likewise be carried to an aesthetic fanaticism for reckless and disordered rhythms. And such fanaticism for one school of art or another leads to an isolation of the order of design, whatever it might be, until the style becomes of more consequence than the subject. That state of mind which is recognizable in the insistence upon the *manner* in which a work of art is executed identifies the baroque artist.

Baroque, then, is a critical term more applicable to many modernists of today and their stylized and self conscious modes of expression than to the majority of artists of the so-called Baroque period, the Seventeenth Century in Europe. Surely it is an unsatisfactory title for the art of that age of complex and contradictory emotions which only in a few instances became hyper-aesthetic and which, in all but the greatest artists, were hardly aesthetic at all. The confusing vagueness of the word's meaning may be dispelled by tracing it back to its origins in that extravagant architecture where the entire façade of a building was the enlargement of an intensified idea of design. Applied to painting the decorative unit was more or less unconscious and instinctive in the Orientals and the Byzantines but became a passion for sculptural drawing and modelling with the Florentines of the Sixteenth Century. It took on dramatic illumination and color and a passionate linear rhythm with Tintoretto and El Greco, and El Greco in fact became the most striking exemplar of the baroque mind at its best. Every part of his picture was in precisely the style of the whole. Not a fold of drapery, not a square inch of painted surface but revealed the powerful pattern-making instinct working through

the live and fury of dynamic expressionism. The baroque in every period can be recognized by this all-over-pattern, whether it occurs in a Bacchanal of a royal palace or an altar painting for a Spanish church or a simply attractive overmantel for a Twentieth Century apartment; whether it is a matter of dynamically related volumes set in motion as in Rubens or of terrocous flame-like forms and colors as in Greco or of intersecting planes and variegated textures as in the Cubism of Picasso and Braque. Emphatic architectural and geometrical stylism pervaded by a consistent and no-nonsense pattern—there can be no mistake about what is baroque. Whereas Greco was a prophet of this attitude he was also great because of his visions and his dreams. His descendants are too often baroque with nothing of their own to say and an over-emphatic and increasingly collective way of saying nothing.

D. P.

C. L. W.

VINCENT VAN GOGH

CYPRESSES

*Collection Justin Thannhauser, Berlin*

# THE CURRENT AMERICAN ART SEASON

BY

RALPH FLINT

ANY analytic consideration of the 1929-30 American art season before it has been allowed to round out a full term may seem at first glance hazardous if not untimely. With three months yet to go many unexpected items might well arise to color conclusions. Yet so sharply defined has the course and character of the current season been that it would seem most unlikely its general complexion could be radically modified by subsequent events. Rather does it appear probable that the provocative tenor and the lively tempo of this frankly Franco-American session will go on apace until the disintegrating touch of summer scatters the participants. And it must be further allowed, for the sake of discussion, that the American art season in its essentials means the New York season, since what transpires in the Manhattan galleries inevitably dominates and shapes the artistic destinies of the nation.

From the very opening exhibition of the current season it has been evident that the continued rise of the so-called School of Paris in public favor was the main issue. This group, conveniently brought under a general heading, somewhat inexact perhaps as to racial constitution but sufficiently clear as to its status quo, has come into a widespread recognition and acceptance that has surprised the most sanguine of its American sympathizers. This overseas body of artists, however diverse in talents, tastes and tendencies, constitutes the most amazing mass movement in the history of art. With Paris as the focal point, it radiates its vitalizing message of aesthetic revolt to all quarters of the Western world. While the European capitals have long since adopted its tenets of pictorial independence it

has remained for New York to arrive at a similar degree of acknowledgment only in this year of grace.

Reaching a magnificent maturity within its own boundaries before it became anything of an issue in America, this movement, once a rising tide set in, soon had sufficient momentum to take the town, and to make the biggest artistic sensation yet recorded in the annals of American art. Scorned by the academic bodies, the new art fairly leaped into the front ranks. Aided and abetted by the more astute dealers and collectors, it appeared, as if by some concerted action, in gallery after gallery, piling up evidence for a movement no longer on the defensive, winning victory after victory with astounding ease, and suddenly springing upon a rapidly capitulating public its main offensive in the form of the newly organized Museum of Modern Art. The astounding success of this unique and timely institution is now a matter of history, and marks the peak of a movement cradled in the equally famous Armory Show of 1913.

Of course the School of Paris group has not been unknown to the cognoscenti of the new world. Since the time that Cézanne came into any sort of recognition in his own land, far-seeing Americans were on hand to acquire examples of the better known men. Here and there local collections began to be formed that reflected the new tastes and traditions. Certain American dealers began publicly to proclaim the merits of this innovator and that. Cézanne, van Gogh, Gauguin, Matisse, were names that came to have a definite authoritative ring. The decorative aspects of the new movement began to be broadcast in various accessories bearing the Paris hall-marks. Generous representation of the new modernistic styles in interior decoration was made by leading New York department stores. The general public came in due season to accept the new modes, to enjoy the bright echo of its own mechanistic times in these new settings and accoutrements. Even the Metropolitan Museum gave its stamp of approval to this decorative trend in comprehensive exhibitions of interiors of both foreign and domestic

stamp. Thus the more easily understood phases of modernism became assimilated and this public recognition led inevitably to the beginning of a more intensive cultivation.

Hitherto conservative collectors were known to be taking up with the new men. The dealers began to import work by radically-minded members of the School of Paris. Picasso, Chirico, Survage, Dufy, Modigliani, de Segonzac, Derain, Braque, Lurcat, here were even more provocative names to swell the lists. A new art that was virile, strong, at variance with tradition, was to be met with on all sides. The story spread by word of mouth as well as by the regular sources of critical estimation. The movement built itself up into a mighty torrent, catching more and more of the great American public into its onrushing stream. Like the sudden psychological uprising of the Spanish craze some seven years back which swept Zuloaga into sudden, unexpected public favor, the new movement broke into frantic activity with the beginning of the current season. When the doors of the new Museum of Modern Art were formally opened and the word got about that four of the principal founders of modernism were to be seen in almost regal representation, and that the museum itself was a permanent institution under the auspices of a group of trustees comprising, among others, such well-known American collectors as Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Miss Lizzie Bliss, Sam Lewisohn, Frank Crowninshield, Duncan Phillips, Chester Dale, Paul J. Sachs and Stephen C. Clark, the public response was immediate and overwhelming. During the course of the first exhibition the attendance was phenomenal, the eager interest of the majority making the occasion even more memorable. The second show, comprising a group of nineteen contemporary Americans, still further consolidated public acceptance of the new museum and its purpose, while the third event, dealing with the so-called School of Paris group, brought such response from the multitudes that the resources of the museum's temporary quarters in the Hecksher Building were taxed beyond reasonable limits, a ready argu-

ment for hastening the plans for permanent quarters. And, as if this successful launching of a new museum was not sufficient indication that modernism had been taken to heart by the American public in all earnestness and good faith, there came the official announcement that Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney had endowed a museum exclusively for American Art to the tune of about a million dollars in continuation of the fine policy of enthusiastically supporting contemporary work maintained this past decade by the Whitney Studio Club and Gallery. Counting the already established Gallery of Living Art that Albert E. Gallatin sponsors, NewYork thus becomes the "locale" for three museum groups devoted in the main to the best interests of the modernist movement, conclusive and eloquent proof that the season of 1929-30 is to go down as a red-letter one in Manhattan history.

The opening guns of the current season were more or less simultaneously fired at Kraushaar's, de Hauke's and Reinhardt's, each with a group exhibition of the School of Paris men, the Kraushaar selection emphasizing Derain. The de Hauke Gallery continued its attack with a most important and comprehensive exhibition of canvases by the late Amadeo Modigliani, that unhappy Italian genius who came to Paris and flowered briefly but vividly amid the leaders of the new movement. The extremely mannered, elongated characterizations of men and women that unmistakably proclaim this artist are so filled with style, penetration and pictorial "élan" that the eccentric elements are set well in abeyance. His canvases are invariably rich in tone, eloquent in setting forth of subject matter, strikingly patterned and boldly executed. They have a genuinely felt primitivism that easily carries them past any charge of affectation. If Modigliani had steeped himself in various phases of primitive art, there is no reason to doubt that the curious style he came to develop was not essentially his own. These canvases, many in number, and comprising the first concerted exhibition of his work in America, proved a most stimu-

*Collection Mrs. Rose, New York*

PAUL CEZANNE

STILL LIFE

lating event, one that clinched the issue of his acceptance by the New York public. Modigliani has contrived a new silhouette, launched a fresh attack on the hackneyed issues of portraiture, and shown an uncertain world the everlasting advantages of a definite aesthetic conviction. Maud Dale, in her monograph which appeared simultaneously with the de Hauke exhibition, speaks of his art as a "revelation" and a revelation it surely is as decisively rendered as El Greco's or Botticelli's or Cézanne's.

Hard upon the Modigliani show came the gala opening of the new Museum of Modern Art, featuring Cézanne, van Gogh, Gauguin and Seurat, in a loan exhibition of splendid proportions. The entire town turned out for the opening, this being perhaps the first time that art and society had come together in anything like the spirit of eager cooperation and anticipation that invariably marks such gatherings in London and Paris. One could hardly find a dissenting eye on this historic afternoon, and there was a marked feeling in the air that something really notable and far-reaching was being accomplished. It would perhaps have seemed strange had there been any reactionary signs that day, since the four artists chosen by the museum's governing board for its initial display can hardly be regarded as anything but "old masters" today. Cézanne, the main instigator of the whole modern movement, was an inevitable choice for inaugural honors by a museum devoted to the artistic issues that have come to be classified as "since Cézanne." The other three contemporary with him, and instrumental each in his own way in furthering the cause of individualistic painting, rounded out a group that all could acclaim as benefactory to the cause of high art.

Cézanne, the greatest painter evolved since the Impressionistic movement changed the art of painting, quite naturally dominates any contemporary group in which he may be placed by virtue of the inherent integrity, originality and grandeur of his art. Denied a place among the leaders of his time, thrown

upon his own resources, he was left to fight out his pictorial problems alone with nature and his own driving sense of beauty. Had popular success come to him it is conceivable that his art would have been less commanding by several degrees. Some thirty canvases from various collections on both sides the Atlantic made the Cézanne showing a most distinguished one, although many of his most important works owned in this country were noticeably absent. Self portraits from the Phillips Memorial Gallery and Robert Treat Paine collections, still life compositions from the Bliss, Lewisohn and Dale collections, the "Boy with Skull" from the Reber collection (Lausanne), the well known blue-gray "Nude Figure," Lord Ivor Spencer Churchill's beautiful small study for "The Bathers," the Ryerson "Estaque," to mention but a few, gave the eager throngs an artistic treat of no mean proportions.

But, perhaps, the most outstanding impression of the exhibition was produced by the startlingly vivid group of canvases by van Gogh, landscapes, portraits, genre pieces, hewn from consciousness by the swift and terrible alchemy of his insurgent art. His tempestuous brushes literally carved their way into the heart of his subject matter, leaving glorious souvenirs of a painting passion that mounted flame-like from his fierce desire for expression; souvenirs that burn today as when he flung them passionately onto canvas, that twist and writhe with an almost terrible, awe-inspiring power. Nothing can exceed his "Cypresses," from the Thannhauser Collection (Berlin), in intensity of conception, in the molten grandeur of its upspringing passages, in its unabated fury of achievement. "The Ravine," "Sunset over Ploughed Field," "Street in San Remy," "House on the Crau," all express this same propulsive manipulation in varying degrees, while his two self-portraits and the other characterizations stand forth as documents of irrepressible individuality and pictorial intensity. To the average New Yorker this phase of the exhibition came with truly startling force, it being the most important representation of van Gogh's art yet made

*Collection M Knoedler & Co.. New York*

PIERRE AUGUSTE RENOIR

MME. HENRIOT AS A PAGE

in this country. The Gauguin canvases likewise made their mark, delighting with their richly tinctured passages of semi-barbaric splendor. The group of South Sea subjects displayed his talents at their most mature, evoking in round terms the mellow, flowering beauty of Polynesian life. Seurat, quietly holding his own in this rather strangely assorted company, made a lasting impression by the charm and dignity of his delicately nurtured landscapes and figure pieces painstakingly wrought in a most exacting style of "pointillisme." His large "Side Show," and the study for "La Grande-Jatte" were two of the most revealing canvases from his hand. Nearly one hundred items were distributed through the six galleries of the new museum and the attendance during the four weeks came close to fifty thousand. And it must be noticed that this drove of gallery-goers was of a decidedly different caliber from the curious thousands that packed the Sorolla and Zuloaga shows to earlier suffocation.

Hard upon the opening of the Post-Impressionists at the Modern Museum came the Renoir exhibition at Knoedler's, bringing forward a selected group of canvases dealing with his classical period, dating roughly from 1875 to 1886. Here was the fine flowering of this French genius who informed the opalescent glamor of Monet with a fuller sense of form, standing midway between that evanescent luminist and the Master of Aix, and responsible for one of the loveliest chapters in French art. His huge and solemn "Diane Chasseresse," an 1867 canvas, added to the exhibition probably for purposes of comparison, showed Renoir in Courbetesque bondage to monumentally developed form and doubled the enchantment of such later delights as his haunting "Madame Henriot," "Dans les Roses," "La Femme aux Lilas," and "La Source." The "Madame Henriot," a figure of greatest dignity and charm softly clad in shimmering white satin and set against a wine colored ground, has all the traditional appeal of French painting, from Watteau down to Derain, truly a museum piece of the first order. In his "Dans les

Roses," it would seem that mere paint could go no further in establishing the efflorescence of nature in the full cry of summer splendor, so alive is this garden scene by his skillful rendering of filtered sunlight. He established a fine piece of pictorial animation in the "Le Moulin de la Galette," wrongly described in Meier-Graefe's "Renoir" as being the picture in the Luxembourg.

Furthering the School of Paris "réclame" and adding a giddy flock of grace notes to the mounting season was the Raoul Dufy exhibition at the Valentine Gallery, wherein this irrepressibly-minded modernist took active stock of "la vie moderne" in a dextrously managed group of improvisations, seemingly dashed off during a casual morning's stroll at Monte Carlo or Deauville or Montparnasse. But of course such impressions are highly deceptive, for improvisateurs like Dufy only arrive at their high-tension accomplishments by way of the straight and narrow path of technical discipline and strict attention to business. However, the fun of such work is embedded there and not to be denied, nor is the skill and bravura of his painting. He gets more swing and go into his swiftly summarized race track scenes than the actual events possess, and he employs the fashionable swash of plangent, tricky color to the utmost. When it comes to figure work, Dufy is on less certain ground, although there should be little cause for complaint at his rather drastic treatment of the human form after the jiu-jitsuing it has received this Twentieth Century at the hands of the modernists. I simply mean to infer that Dufy is not quite as clever in accomplishing a nude as he is in capturing a Longchamps favorite or touching off a baroque façade. But his line is fascinatingly decisive and his color sense as gay as any boulevardier could desire.

In strange contrast to all this Gallic parade, the annual Winter show of the National Academy appeared even more academic than ever, with the usual men and women performing in the usual way, the portraitists turning out their conventionally

manoeuvered likenesses, the landscapists repeating their stock performances, the still-life painters and the flower painters and the genre painters all at it very much according to Hoyle. Not that one cannot find a certain dozen or so of fine things of the traditional sort in any Academy show, accomplished canvases taken by themselves but in the light of recent developments not particularly stimulating. Even the short-lived touch of publicity that enlivened the opening week, owing to Edwin W. Dickinson's large and fairly undecipherable "Fossil Hunters" being hung upside down, failed to do more than create a gossipy flare-up over a painting that otherwise would have aroused small comment. Worthy of notice were John E. Costigan, one of the very few genuine painters of the soil America has produced, whose canvases are invariably filled with a lyric, Milletesque charm, Jerome Myers, Ernest L. Blumenschein, one of the most impressive of the Taos group, and, skied in the Vanderbilt Gallery, a talent that might outreach itself in time, Jes Schlaikjer, whose "Homestead" carried on something of the fine impression this young mid-Western painter made at a previous Academy. The sculptural turnout was negligible. A similar gathering of academicians took place at the annual prize exhibition at the Grand Central Galleries, with little variation in personnel or performance.

Edward Bruce, returning to America for a painting interlude between Italian sojournings, exposed a large group of recent canvases at the Reinhardt Galleries, done in his well known style and yielding pleasant panoramic glimpses of Tuscan and Roman country-side. One of the most intelligent of American outdoor painters, he can hardly help but transcribe a scene with distinction, so well equipped is he in the knowledge of landscape. Yet he stands in grave danger of achieving an unhappy monotony both in color and in treatment, due perhaps to a too great preference for gently rippling panoramas and a too passive brushwork. He should take stock of the new modes and manners, as has his fellow Anticolian, Maurice Sterne, who

has boldly launched out in a radically new style of painting based directly on van Gogh. In a large group of flower paintings shown later in the season at these same galleries, the Sterne canvases, with the paint still fresh upon them, proved a revelation of how a man of established reputation and technique could, by taking due thought, add to his artistic stature. Sterne, had he been so minded, might have rested content with what he had already achieved, being one of the most distinguished painters and sculptors to be found on the American roster. Yet here he was, suddenly confronted by the searing, bristling brushwork of van Gogh at the Modern Museum, deciding that something of his deeply furrowed, sharply streaked pigmentation might well be incorporated into his own technical equipment, and straightway gaining fresh impetus and power. Indeed, the new Sterne fruit and flower groups exuded a mounting vigor and vibrance that found immediate recognition among his admirers, and while the new brushmanship is a bit obvious in its relation to the great Dutch modernist, it is safe to assume that it will only be a matter of time before Sterne gives it a new leading that will make it all his own.

Meanwhile the intriguing story of French art went on unfolding through one exhibition after another, bringing practically the whole modern group forward in one-man shows of special excellence, besides giving such men as Rodin and Bourdelle due recognition. Perhaps the most unique event of the year was the Maria Lani hippodrome at the Brummer Galleries, wherein this amiable and obviously personable French actress was to be seen through the agency of fifty-one distinguished portraitists, ranging all the way from Despiau to Man Ray, Bonnard to Van Dongen. One trembles at the thought of all the sittings that this intrepid devotee to modern art must have endured in her quest, all the stairs she must have climbed to the various ateliers, although the excessive brevity of Matisse's seven-stroke summary could have cost neither artist nor sitter undue patience or pain. However, as everyone knows, sitting to

Despiau means some sixty well protracted sessions so that Mlle. Lani's task in making the complete rounds must have been considerable. It is certain, at least in a town like Paris where the daring and bizarre count for something, that the "réclame" from such a "tour de force" must have been worth the trouble. Here is a performance not likely to be repeated within our time, one that offered students of psychology and art a most unique opportunity to investigate the range of artistic license that this formidable company of artists displayed. As might be expected, the Despiau head—the one in chalk—easily captured first place, for there is no other protraitist in any medium working today who knows how to achieve such masterful, timeless portraits as he. His quiet supremacy in the midst of the stirring issues that present-day fashions in art have aroused is one of the most interesting commentaries on the whole modern movement with its rising insistence on rude dissonance and mechanistic exposure. Here is a work that expresses the intensive calm and wide benignity of old China or ancient Greece, of golden ages whether they be Egyptian or Indian or of any other land, a work brought into perennial freshness by the recurrent art of the sculptor and by his tireless pursuit of perfection. Despiau waves aside the dicta of schools and movements by the logic and eloquence of a vision that embraces at one and the same time the basic simplicity and infinite variety of essential beauty. His reputation in America, of comparatively recent origin, continues to mount with increasing rapidity, and a special group of his work, comprising more than twenty items from the Crowninshield Collection, was held at a later time in the newly established Fifty-sixth Street Galleries.

Counteracting to some degree the flood of French art loosed upon the galleries came the second exhibition at the Modern Museum of Art, this time featuring contemporary American painters without stressing any one particular school or group. Nineteen artists were selected, each representing some especially significant phase of present-day painting. This limited list

could hardly hold all the eligible names and it immediately became a subject of heated discussion in every art circle, to the extent of one art magazine offering a prize for the best "All-American Nineteen." It was a tactless move to include Lyonel Feininger, a German-American of little or no local reputation or representation in such a limited, lime-lighted body, nor did the presence of Pascin, Balkan born, French to his finger-tips, add to the general peace of the American mind. Neither was it any too helpful to have several of the artists seen retrospectively. Taken all in all however the exhibition served its purpose although it came as something of an anti-climax after the spectacular Cézanne-van Gogh-Gauguin-Seurat show. Speicher Kent, Hopper, Lawson, Sloan and Miller represented the more or less conservative party, with Weber, Pascin, Karfiol, Kuniyoshi, and Kuhn forming the left wing, and leaving Burchfield, Sterne, Dickinson, Hart, O'Keeffe, Marin and Demuth somewhere in between. Marin is a hard man to classify, being pretty much of a law unto himself. Each was allowed four or five paintings, so that the affair escaped any discursiveness or ambiguity. It was frankly American painting of today. Georgia O'Keeffe, the only woman honored by the committee, made an effective showing with her boldly stated patterns, and held her own with the others. Kuniyoshi undertook to stampede the exhibition with a large reclining "Nude," ambitiously planned in the grand manner, but failing to come off because of too flexible construction. It displayed his stylistic manner of painting and celebrated his affection for mahogany browns and resonant blacks. One of the most individual and gifted of the younger men, he would undoubtedly occupy a more dominant place in American painting were he not so persistently precocious in subject matter. Walt Kuhn's contributions looked well, particularly his "Clown" with its insistent play of dead white. Bernard Karfiol's poetically conceived "Boy" from the Phillips Collection, stood out in sharp contrast to his late canvases wherein he achieves a more sustained and buoyant technique

Private Collection, New York

CHARLES BURCHFIELD

PROMENADE

MAX WEBER

THREE JUGS

but drops away from the sturdy simplicity of his earlier manner. His "Seated Nude," now a permanent item in the Modern Museum's collection, is a lively performance and pitched in a higher key than the "Boy," yet it suffers from a certain reddish monotony in the flesh tones. The rich, gamey flavor of Pop Hart's picaresque art was well to the fore, and the Burchfield water colors, particularly the more recent ones, had a healthy if rather self-conscious American tang to them. Hopper, too, stood out for an uncompromising handling of certain rugged realities of the American scene, while the Demuth studies of fruits and flowers tipped the balance in the opposite direction with their delicately wrought passages of concentrated color and their elaborated textures. Max Weber's "Loaf of Bread" and "Three Jugs" made a wide impression, and the Sterne canvases were as usual instinct with his long acknowledged understanding of rhythmic pattern and glowing color. The group of Marin water colors, which included such rare numbers as "Maine Islands" and "Back of Bear Mountain" from the Phillips Collection and the dazzling "Red Lightning" from the Howald Collection, showed this singular artist in rare form. Further comment on his art is reserved for a later part of this review.

In further praise of the School of Paris came a succession of one-man exhibitions by Kisling, Utrillo, Friez, Mauny, Gromaire, Jacob, de Segonzac, Picasso, Derain, Dunand, Matisse, with supplementary group shows of oils, water colors and lithographs, culminating in the "Painting in Paris" exhibition at the Modern Museum, the third and most sensational offering of its short career. The record of the opening exhibition was easily surpassed and the show had to be extended by a considerable period to accommodate the multitudes bent on finding out all about this new art. The widely heralded luminaries of the School of Paris were all present in compelling, vigorous representation, with the addition of a few less disturbing men like Forain and Vuillard. Picasso, easily the outstanding figure of

the whole season by virtue of his capricious, extravagant, exotic yet commanding performances, became the storm center with his "Seated Woman," otherwise known as "The Parrot Woman," from the Wiborg Collection. Here was sur-realism with a vengeance. Nothing quite so stark, so malign, so sinister, so pictorially daring had come to pass in any of the other School of Paris shows, and so the storm of indignant curiosity broke over this particular canvas. In fact the main gallery was predominantly his with his large "Abstraction" in postery reds, greens and black, his black, brown and white "Musical Instruments" from the Carpenter Collection, with its full bodied interplay of semi-developed forms, his heroic "Woman in White," his neo-classical, large scale "Woman and Child," looking extravagantly silly and pretentious, his appealing "Pierrot," from the Lewisohn Collection, and of course the "Seated Woman," to mention the outstanding items. There were also the neighboring Braques, the large Bonnard "The Palm," and the de Chirico "Horses," the last from the Wiborg Collection. But it was a Picasso field day, with the protean playboy of the painting world all over the lot in as many moods and manners as you could ask for. For no one artist has ever ranged so far afield as he, tried out so many pictorial by-paths, or taken so many chances. Of all the sur-realists none have captured a more tangible or showy trophy than his nightmarish "Seated Woman." As a stirring piece of interlocking line and bold patterning, this ghoulish harliquinade of the nether-world remains perhaps his masterpiece. It is a painting that would require immense courage to live with.

The fine Braques stolidly adhering to an almost monochromatic discipline, showed this master abstractionist at the height of his powers and in a more monumental mood than usual. "The Table" and "The Mantle," both exhilarating performances, are powerfully organized and richly gifted. Matisse who, in company with van Gogh, is probably the most potent force among the painting fraternities at the moment, had at

*Collection Miss Wiborg, New York*

PABLO PICASSO

SEATED WOMAN

PABLO PICASSO

WOMAN IN WHITE

*Collection Miss Bliss, New York*

least ten representative canvases to his credit. While none of them could be called superlative, they each revealed some special phase of his art, from the severe blocked-in "Seated Nude" of the Samuel White Collection to the brightly diapered "Pose of Buddha" and the tonally triumphant "Interior" of the Cone Collection. The combined record reveals him a most dextrous painter of natural form rigorously subjected to a preconceived patterning. He has carried on the rich scoring of Cézanne and van Gogh to even more drastic conclusions, sharpening the color contrasts, intensifying the visual attack of line and arabesque, multiplying accents and giving them a sort of checkerboard distribution, a freshly conceived diapering that keeps the whole canvas glitteringly alive and pointed. His color is insurgently bright and florid without being blatant. His designs are constantly on the move yet never tiring. He is primarily a painter of still-life, even when most concerned with the figure, his consummate sense of design enabling him to reduce the human form to barest decorative essentials. Occasionally, as in the "White Plumes" from the Clark Collection, he achieves succinct characterizations approaching Modigliani's but ordinarily he ignores the individual and the particular in sweeping generalizations. Taken by themselves the ladies that frequent his canvases are a rather sorry crew, but looked at as incidental to the decorative whole they serve their spatial purpose.

One of the most noteworthy groups of this "Painting in Paris" display concerned a man too little known in New York and one apt to be overlooked in the crush of clangorous modernity, Pierre Bonnard. Thanks principally to the enthusiastic support of this painter by the Phillips Memorial Gallery, there is a certain Bonnard following in this country, although nothing approaching the wide acclaim he enjoys in France. Seven canvases from his hand, including the large and sumptuous "The Palm" of the Phillips Collection and four other examples of the highest order, showed Bonnard to be a supreme colorist, an ima-

gist of wide originality and deeply poetical persuasion, and a designer of novel patterns untrammeled by code or convention. Bonnard may appear soft, secluded, old-schoolish to many who are attuned only to the fashionable cadences and categories of the moment, yet his claim to eminence among the elite of present day painters is too well established by vivid and sustained performance to be in any doubt. He still carries on the luminist tradition that sprang into being with the plein-air painters of France but he is miles removed from the purely impressionistic group by force of his reconditioning of natural fact into freshly minted fancy. He harks back to several masters of the Nineteenth Century in France, yet he overrides dates and schools somewhat in the way of Despiau through an accrued sense of beauty that knows not time.

Derain, with his reversal to classical contours and sombre coloration, struck an important note in contradistinction to the sharp pictorial summaries of his neighbors. His later works, mellow in tone and mildly assertive in line and angle beside the mechanistic contrivances of many of his confreres, emphasized the catholicity of the modern group. Like Bonnard, he goes his own gait, and reaches his goal by the innate power of his visual conceptions. While his intermediate painting states are of interest, many of his earlier accomplishments seem cumbersome and even crude beside the tonal refinements and Gallic elegances of his present period, so well illustrated in this exhibition by his "Manot, the Dancer," "Back of a Woman" and "Southern France." He accomplishes the grand manner without loss of simplicity, sustains a rich impasto without becoming fussy or heavy handed, and attains to an almost vanished dignity and decorum without the slightest trace of affectation. The de Segonzac canvases were typical of this painter's heavily loaded pigment and propulsive brushwork, so eminently suited to his particular manner in keeping his boldly picked out patterns in constant flux. Two Paris street scenes by Utrillo displayed the quiet pictorial distinction that is synonymous with his name,

PIERRE BONNARD

THE PALM

*Collection Stephen C. Clark*

HENRI MATISSE

POSE OF BUDDHA

and there were several romantically flavored canvases by Dufresne, whose untrammelled style exactly suits the fanciful content of his art. Gromaire, square and squat and slightly forbidding; Vlaminck, blustering and obvious; Dufy, sprightly and engaging as ever; Laurencin, palely loitering; Chagall and Rouault and Soutine and Delauney rather too fauvish for comfort; Miro, with his stunt picture, "Dog Barking at the Moon," raised to undue prominence by the publicity of a well known critic's Freudian implications; and lastly that good trio of surrealists, de Chirico, Lurcat, and Survage, whose strange effusions add the last word to modern painting—all these, plus the slightly outmoded Leger, the little known Fautrier, the clever Kisling, and the advancing Friesz, made up the sum-total of this world-beating ensemble.

Coincident with the opening weeks of the "Painting in Paris" exhibition, a one-man show by Matisse was held at the Valentine Gallery, and again the crowds made eager pilgrimage. His checker-board style of patterning was brilliantly in evidence in several smartly executed interiors with reclining figures, and there was an interesting new note to be observed in two largish figure compositions couched in a more evasive form, suggestive of Picasso in heroic mood and of Modigliani with his statuesque silhouettes. An even more recently exposed example of this master at the same gallery showed him attempting a large-scale group of three women, a grandiose canvas reaching from floor to ceiling, but failing to coalesce or compose in the way that one has come to expect from Matisse. Also trailing the "Painting in Paris" exhibition was a double-barrelled event at the Reinhardt Galleries revealing Picasso and Derain in a retrospective showing, thereby adding to the congestion of the already over-crowded elevators in the Heckscher Building, and making a further rendezvous for the insatiable students of modern painting. From the tentative and relatively unimportant to the full-fledged and proclamatory, these two diametrically opposed apostles were revealed in the various stages of their spec-

tacular ascents Picasso was seen running all the way from the most representational to the most abstract, from flagrant negroid shocker to delicately limned sentimentalizing on his favorite Pierrot.

The Othon Friesz exhibition, at the Brummer Gallery, brought this artist's accomplishments up to date in a very thorough manner and showed the nicely balanced, coolly crystallized state of his recent painting. His harbor scenes are perhaps his most remarkable; jolly visions of busy waterways keyed up to a fine pitch of clear, luminous color. The Max Jacob show, at the same galleries, showed an undoubted talent delighting in understatement, a rather too self-conscious reticence that prevents any immediate intimacy. He is a man to be got at by degrees. The Jacques Mauny exhibition at de Hauke's argued a talent similarly inclined but one that delights in sly undervaluation and rather welcomes the quick acceptance. Mauny likes to trip up his public with the unexpected and seemingly irrelevant, besides favoring a photographic complex that only makes his work a little ridiculous, at least to a people grown camera-wise. A fine group of etchings by de Segonzac at Kraushaar's revealed a new side of his work and one that might have easily been expected from the nature of his fine wiry line so often seen in his pen-and-ink sketches. He is obviously a man of the world, jotting down bright impressions of people and things as he wanders from prize ring to café, from beach to polo field. The Kisling show at the new Balzac Gallery gave New York its first chance to see his work in any quantity and it proved him a facile, advancing painter, fond of a Derainesque smoothness of paint but with a more obvious color sense and a keen enjoyment of showy brushwork. The Utrillo exhibition at the same galleries brought forth nothing new about a man who has so long been a familiar figure about the town. The Balzac Galleries also gave several weeks to a fine group of small bronzes by Rodin, which displayed his mastery of realistic detail and brilliant craftsmanship but also gave signs of dating

badly. The Bourdelle Memorial Exhibition at the new Rosenbach Galleries showed this sculptor advanced a few paces beyond Rodin by his strong architectonic sense of composition, although his detail follows more or less the accepted plastic canons of the master of Meudon. But Bourdelle leaned more toward the heroic than his master, and he often reached a high pitch of sculptural achievement, as in the attending figures of the Alvear equestrian monument and in the fine upstanding "France," now in the Brooklyn Museum. And so, except for a brief mention of the Hélene Perdriat debut at the new Chambrun Galleries, which proved how negligible her work appears away from the printed page, this practically sums up the case for French art for the current season.

The American side of the season's budget naturally suffers from an embarrassment of riches with its endless succession of exhibitions, big and little. John Marin, chief of the local protagonists and probably the one man of our time most certain of high international ranking when the years have come to bring to his art the necessary perspective, appeared as initial attraction at the new galleries which Alfred Stieglitz, forced out of his intimate nook at the Anderson Galleries, has established at 509 Madison Avenue under the laconic title of "An American Place." Here, with an unadorned background eloquently suggestive of the mechanistic age we live in, were ranged forty-seven water colors, vintage of 1928, showing John Marin in his latest and perhaps most eloquent phase. It makes one tremble to think how near this exhibition came to storehouse consignment, how only a last minute arrangement made possible the equipping of "An American Place," and how Marin was set frantically to work framing the water colors that he had hardly hoped to exhibit. Only those who have come to see in Marin the most amazing exponent of modern art in America can understand what a loss that would have been to the current season, especially at a time of French domination of the local market under a regular Wall Street manipulation by the dealers.

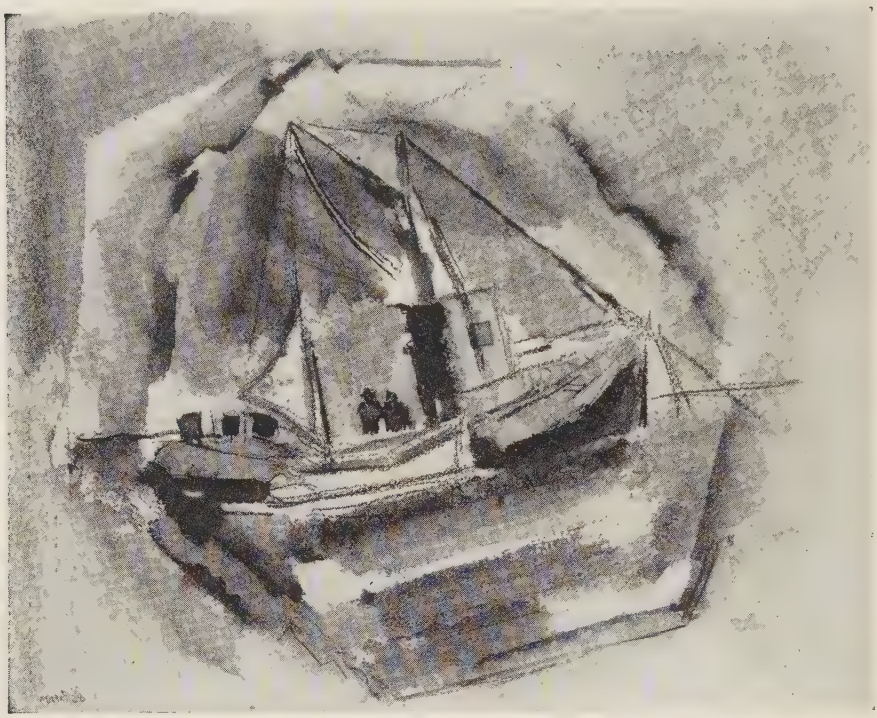
It is curious to see Stieglitz, once among the most active advocates of the Fauves at his now historic "291" Gallery, swinging about to champion his little group of Americans, at whose head stands the redoubtable Marin. He has backed Marin for twenty-odd years and watched him grow from one stage of expressionistic greatness to the next, until he has come to feel that this is his life work in the modern field that he has cultivated so long.

The new group of Marins—and his actual work is always a full year ahead of exhibition schedule—is easily the most brilliant and sustained of any previous series. While it may not possess pyrotechnical pieces like the flaming Woolworth series or the combustible lower Manhattan studies or the startling "Red Lightning" of the Howald Collection or the elementally rugged "Gray Sea" in the Phillips Collection, yet in its general average it proved the most satisfactory display of his all-round talents that his most ardent supporters could desire. These forty-seven water colors, dealing mostly with the Maine coast at Small Point and Deer Isle, were the product of a single summer when Marin was at the top of his bent. Suffice to say that in range of expression, variety of subject and mood, wealth of pictorial invention, and unflagging virtuosity of technique, the exhibition was a veritable "tour de force." He contrives to extract from each scene the very heart of its pictorial being, catching the essential truths in toto and in detail, whipping them all together into strangely irreducible composites of near and far, of the general and the particular. Only once or twice they drop into any very protracted session of pure representation, yet all the while keeping strictly to natural truths. Displaying a simpler color range than any other water colors of our day—his present gamut runs close to that of Winslow Homer minus the latter's play of vermillion accent—Marin rings change upon change on his central webbing of tempered grays, dropping into a warm ochre of reddish tone for foreground use at times, but mainly reaching into cool greens and

*Courtesy Alfred Stieglitz*

JOHN MARIN

FROM HORSE MOUNTAIN



JOHN MARIN

FISHING SMACKS

sparkling airy blues for relief. One of the most impressive performances in the exhibition was a group of four sketches done of the same scene during the progress of a single afternoon, in which he advances from one interpretation to another, rising in temper and technique, each proof coming off surer than the preceeding one, until at the last he has reached a very skeletonized nature. The swiftly hurtling passages of sky and sea and mountain are all in a fine state of cosmic parade, as masterfully aligned as any Thermopylae. Such water coloring gets to the living heart of nature and yields up treasures that never pall or grow heavy with time.

Except for an obvious stemming from Cézanne, which genealogical distinction practically the whole painting world today shares with him, Marin is perhaps the most uniquely American painter we have. Modern to his finger tips almost from the start, evolving his cryptic style out of his own aesthetic consciousness, painting for himself alone (thanks to the steadfast god-fathering of Stieglitz) Marin is obviously difficult for the average layman to grasp. He stands for a rare state of pictorial consciousness that has been achieved through the long firing process of whatever incubation goes to shape genius. To get the drift of his pictorial thought naturally requires of the beholder some preparation. I shall not attempt any laborious or fatiguing explanation of an art that is the very soul of spontaneity and unlabored delight save to point out that its metaphysical content is quite naturally out of the range of those who only want their artistic pleasures to correspond to their other comfortable arrangements in life. Marin is a stirring adventure, offering fine antidote to earthy art, however fashionably sponsored. Perhaps he is too fine stuff to make an immediate mark with the multitude, although this year of grace has certainly seen his most popular exhibition. Marin is beginning to be widely collected, to be heralded by those internationally in authority as a person of very considerable importance. He should by rights be the very man for the modernists, for he matches angle for

angle with the best of them, states as stenographically as the best his pictorial findings in quickening line and color. He sums up, in the time it takes to cover the paper, whole situations, while other men are fussing with detail. He arrives at structural formations and unforeseen figurations. It is almost as if he were taking down divine dictation. In what other way can we explain how he comes at his pictorial conclusions and as to why he does thus and so with his strange outer bandings. Yet they hang together, coalesce, interweave with an interpenetration that defies analysis. He is an uncompromising student of nature despite the abstract conclusions that he reaches and he is as essentially true to natural beauty as Turner. He possesses a staggering wealth of invention, all the way from the most delicate, often the most humorous embroidery to the most rugged, brushed-in, crashing cacophany of cyclonic strokes. It is often complained, particularly among dealers, that Marin is a lesser man because of working in the lighter medium of water color. I often hear it said, "But he paints only in water color!" Yet it has been my recent experience to study over a considerable period of time a magnificent group of widely ranging Marins in comparison with canvases of world-wide fame in the same collection and it is my conviction that for sheer vitality and carrying power he stands up well beside the best of them. I recall a deeply green mountain scene by Marin beside one of Courbet's substantial masterpieces of rocky hillside eclipsing it in sheer mass and rigid form. He digs deep for the play of forces that sustain the natural panorama and brings to light more sense of the underlying progression of things than any painter I know. Marin is, first and last, a painter of movement.

Another typically American event was the memorial celebration of the art of Arthur B. Davies at the Metropolitan Museum, continuing that institution's long line of special exhibitions that have honored such men as Homer, Eakins and Ryder. Out of the endless imageries that sprang from his poetical musings a very intelligent selection was made that kept strictly

*Collection Miss Wiborg, New York*

GIORGIO DE CHIRICO

HORSES

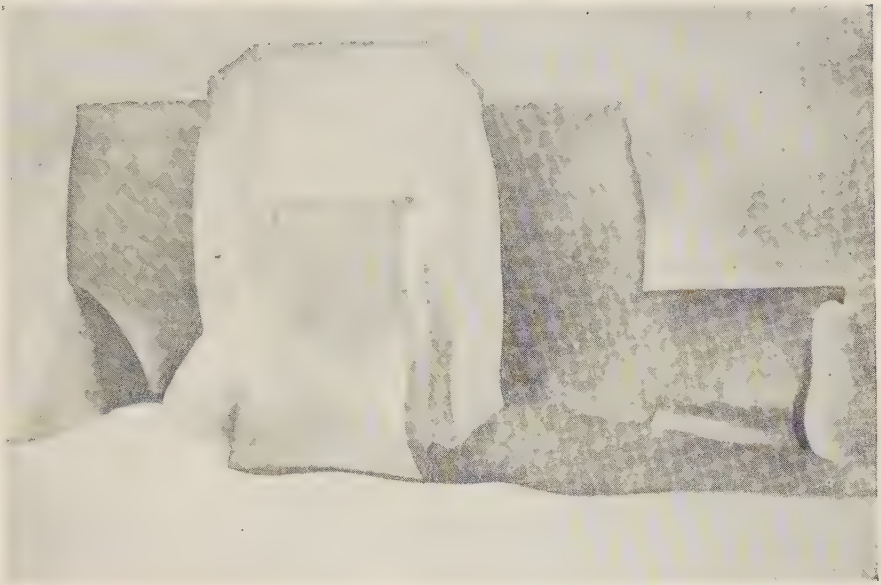
ARTHUR B. DAVIES

HORSES OF ATTICA

to the less experimental side of his work. More than one hundred canvases filled the large hall of the museum, with a certain quantity of textiles and bronzes from his hand that the authorities saw fit to include. But the real Davies is to be found in his painting. Even his flood of drawings and etchings do not contain as much of the man as the canvases upon which he lavished his attention with an almost pre-Raphaelite devotion to surface and detail. At one time Davies was attracted to the cubistic style of painting and his period undoubtedly did much to stir him to a more ebullient handling so that some of his later landscapes and figure pieces, happily recovered from any excess of enforced angularity, came to possess a freshness of design and color and a spontaneity of handling that make them his most attractive offerings. Throughout the whole exhibition ran an unbroken thread of pictorial charm that linked the various phases of his art together into one splendid gesture, into one significant salute to beauty. In the light of this strict obedience to the dictates of his artistic conscience, and by virtue of his devotion to his calling, the various limitations of his art do not perhaps matter so much. So many times the errant figures that fill his foregrounds tend to drift apart from the setting, to evoke the sense of model and studio rather than the exact nomenclature of the canvas, as in his "Afterthoughts of Earth" or "Day of Good Fortune." He often failed to achieve the Giorgionesque unity of "the time and the place and the loved one all together." Yet when the elements of his design did cohere, as in the "Unicorns," Davies came close to producing masterpieces. In so many cases, however, vagueness of subject matter tends to obscure the painter's best intentions. Adding felicitous titles does not necessarily increase artistic content. His simpler themes are averagely in Davies' happiest vein, such as "Four O'Clock Ladies" and "Along the Erie Canal;" while such ambitious compositions as "Great Mother" leave him reaching for the moon. An early landscape, "Our Hudson River," causes one to ponder the issue of Davies' particular

gift for landscape and to wonder if he would not have risen to greater achievement had he confined himself to this department of painting. His later landscapes came to have a fine gusto, with livelier hues, somewhat suggesting Bonnard's crushed color, and a more vigorous handling. And I recall distinctly the high romanticism of the last group of Italian landscapes that were shown at Ferargil's last season. Except for "A Thousand Flowers," a tapestry lent by Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., that closely approximates the style of his figure paintings, the textiles seemed crude, both in color and design, although Davies was quite convinced of their artistic merits. However, as the fantasist, weaving romantic visions across a firm ground of idyllic landscape, Davies brought a generous and lasting contribution to American art. A small group of canvases by Eakins was shown at the Babcock Galleries but, since he is to be featured along with Homer and Ryder at a later exhibition at the Modern Museum, it would seem best to wait before going into a detailed study of his work.

Georgia O'Keeffe, easily the most outstanding woman painting today in America, was the second to exhibit under the Stieglitz banner at "An American Place," and her display of new work, dealing for the most part with her last summer's painting session in the great Southwest, showed her advancing toward an even more vigorous and varied expression. She has done wonders with the Taos terrain, bringing back a fine set of unhackneyed impressions that only go to show how much can still be extracted from territory so well worked over as this. Suggestive of the strange stark beauty of the place, she chose to paint a series of rude wayside crosses, now hugely black and bleak against the sun-fired, hummocking New Mexico mountains, now pale and weathered against a cool vault of rain-washed blue. She also took decorative stock of the fine adobe structures to be found there. As before, she exposed abstractions of flower and tree forms and for variety added a spinning arrangement of lurid tones leading centrifugally to a curiously



GEORGIA O'KEEFFE

RANCHOS CHURCH

efflorescent core, a painting that fared none too well against the severely gray walls of the gallery which had been so rewarding to Marin. Her increasing strength of design is outstripping her present technical equipment, leaving it in need of a more vigorous handling. In only a single item, where pink and black rock formations have been treated to a livelier brushmanship, do the two sides of her painting really tally. Here the handling helped to speed on the sensory effect of her idea, a great advance over the seemingly impassive, unhurried technique that so often belies the wide intention of her designs. The very nature of O'Keeffe's work demands a more ambitious brushwork.

Among the younger American painters who showed lively signs of increasing talents during the past season were Morris Kantor, Alexander Brook, Karl Knaths, Peter Blume, John Carrol, George Biddle, Stuart Davis and Joseph Pollet. Kantor brought out an imposing group of canvases for his one-man debut at Rehn's, and proved himself to be a modernist in the best sense of the word, unusually inventive in subject matter and composition, striking in his use of light and shade, although too much inclined to spot-light the center of his canvases. He is edging into sur-realistic treatment of his themes without becoming too grotesque or bizarre. He occasionally brings the interior and exterior of a scene into amusing juxtaposition or fusion, casting an O'Neilish gloom over the scene, heightening the main issue or state of mind with a rather exciting theatricalism. This procedure was most ably put into play in the large "Woman Reading" which fairly dominated the all-American exhibition of "33 Moderns" that Mrs. Halpert somehow or other smuggled into the Grand Central Galleries. Kantor has an uncanny sense of showmanship, using just enough material to put his point over and keeping it shrouded with a certain mystery. But his showy scheme of central lighting must not get to be a mannerism or his work will look heavy and set. He is sombre enough as it is in pitching his canvases low

in tone, so it would do no harm to let in a little more light upon his pictorial problems. But he is one of the least derivative of the younger men who are obviously working along the lines of the new school.

Alexander Brook is an American painter who has reached an early maturity by easy stages, content to let his natural talents evolve out of themselves without giving too great heed to fashionable masters. His exhibition at the Valentine Gallery brought conclusive proof of his gradual ripening. Be it figure or still-life or landscape, all come to pass with a charming simplicity and seeming casualness so desirable today. He paints with an easy brush, without being obvious or imitative, and he keeps well within the bounds of his own vision. His large still-life, broader than usual both in stroke and in pattern, indicated that Brook has many more tricks up his sleeve that wait only upon the order of their appearing. A thoroughly sound, American performance, fully informed with the spirit of the times yet never subservient to the dictates of any overseas group. Karl Knaths and Peter Blume, both holding their first one-man shows at the Daniel Gallery, are lively painters, well worth watching. Blume's large "Parade," an elaborately composed hymn to mechanical supremacy, quite ran away with the exhibition. Built up of carefully fitted segments and maintaining a rigid primitivism in construction and brushwork, "Parade" possessed an irresistible all-over splendor of clear-cut design and sharply defined color areas. The other examples of Blume's art bore out the fine promise contained in his chef d'oeuvre. Knaths is one of the most gifted of the modernist group in this country, having arrived at a wonderfully fluent style that requires the support of the nicest sort of pictorial understanding and intention. Perhaps it verges on the tricky at times, so touch and go is the way of it. Yet to Knaths' credit he invariably keeps his canvases alive to the point of virtuosity. As he goes on, this manner of swift summarization will become more demanding, for the very fleetness of his style

and the seeming sketchiness of his work can never hide any lack in inventive ordering of design or in surety of vision. A poor Knaths would come close to being like the little girl with the curl on her off day. He has subtlety and distinction in his color too, fairly low-toned as a rule, yet never dropping into any gloomy range of effects. Stuart Davis, back from Paris with an amusing group of round-the-town impressions very dapperly done in the new simplificationing that Dufy has brought to such a high pitch of perfection, was warmly welcomed at the Downtown Gallery. Davis has given his own interpretation to this type of painting, so that no specific charges of leaning one way or another can be levelled, but it is plain, despite protestations to the contrary, that he would never have come by his present procedure had he not been nurtured to a degree in the French capital. His thin structural line is deployed in finely-sensed perspectives, to which both flat washes and mat textures of light and dark color are added. His work gives the effect of bright banners in the wind. Joseph Pollet, at the same gallery, presented a group of lively canvases that argue a keen pictorial outlook. He has a fine flair for landscape, giving free play to his fondness for fan-shaped bursts of light.

Charles Hopkinson, the most up-and-coming of the Boston painters, showed a new group of his brilliant water colors at Montross in which he more than sustained the high-water mark performances of other years. He has, through long years of persistent search, arrived at a delicately balanced perfection of vision and accomplishment that gives his spirited pictures their fine authority. He has become modern in due course, finding in his water coloring a quickening play of hand and eye that his more conservatively managed portraits do not permit. Boardman Robinson, turned muralist, showed an ambitious series of panels destined for a department store in Pittsburgh that called forth all his pictorial resources. Boldly blocked in, his robust patterns overspread their limits in a too determined effort to be effective, and the many heroic-sized figures, while

well developed in themselves, impeded the general decorative flow of the pattern, upsetting any rhythmic play of line or color that might have been intended. Far more successful were the one-third-scale murals that Augustus Vincent Tack exhibited at Kraushaar's, designs developed in the intricate multiple-area patterning that he has elaborated to such a degree. These dozen or more abstractions, destined for the Phillips Memorial Gallery, are manifestly to be passed upon only in their final state and setting. However it was already possible to mark in one of the lunettes a sturdy ordering of interlocking shapes, a rugged resolving of component parts. Here an early Chinese grandeur has come into his work, and the larger masses of more resonant color lift it quite above its fellows.

George de Forest Brush, honored by the Grand Central Galleries with a generous representation, somehow failed to account for the wide popularity he enjoyed at an earlier period in American art. His heavy reliance on traditional practices of Italian renaissance painting gives his work today a rather musty look despite its pleasant, frank approach toward clear color and meticulously developed form.

Outside the highly profitable presentation of the French modernists there was little from other European sources to grace the present season. A small English group of painters was convened at Agnew's, including such men as John, Sickert, Fry, Orpen, Grant and Steer, but there was little to wax enthusiastic over. Perhaps Walter Sickert's clever little still life, "De Quoi faire une Omelette," acquired by the Phillips Memorial Gallery, was the most provocative canvas shown. The sculpture by Carl Milles, of Sweden, made a fine impression at the Fifty-sixth Street Galleries and Chana Orloff's stylized bronzes at Weyhe's were also acclaimed. The large Belgian exhibition of contemporary art at the Brooklyn Museum brought forth a great quantity of robust yet averagely unimportant work, with such men as Meunier, Anto Carte, Masereel and Ensor most in evidence. Rather does one remember the splendid group of

WALTER SICKERT

THE MAKINGS OF AN OMELETTE

Flemish primitives that graced the Kleinberger Galleries earlier in the season. It included such gems as the "St. Francis Receiving the Stigmata" from the Johnston Collection, Petrus Christus' "Saint" from the Bache Collection, and the delicious Van Der Weyden "Portrait of a Lady" and the famous Memling "Madonna and Child with Angels," both from the Mellon Collection. Mario Toppi, modern Italian primitive from Anticoli, showed his genuinely moving reconstructions of Scriptural events at the Delphic Gallery, where Jose Clemente Orozco appeared at a later date with recent paintings showing the enlivening effect of Manhattan upon the Goyesque style of his Mexican period.

Here then, in its essentials, is the American art season for 1929-30, one that may well be called a season, with its wider, more flaring borders, its School of Paris complexion, its slightly hectic Wall Street beat, its giddy rush of new museums and galleries and attendant throngs. There are those who grumble at the predominant hold that Gallic art has on the public fancy, yet it is the very instrumentality of this giant nutcracker that will undoubtedly serve to split the hard shell of the American art consciousness and release the rich store of genius that is surely destined to appear. Marin alone is sufficient proof that there is not a man among the French group that cannot be matched or even surpassed once the American cosmography gets a sufficient prodding. In the meantime cultivation of the new art forms goes on apace and what transpires in New York is bound to be felt in all parts of the country. There is perhaps a tendency today of insisting too strongly that art be hard and heady, that we school ourselves against all that is soft and gentle and charming. It must be remembered that the art which stirs the deepest is not necessarily the art that shocks our sensibilities the most. However it is safe to assume that the American genius will keep its art on an even keel, absorbing this influence and that much as we have incorporated the various peoples of the earth into our scheme. The Eakins-Homer-

Ryder exhibition which the Modern Museum has already scheduled for the spring season will do much to preserve a respectable balance for the current budget but there is no use denying the facts of the case that the modernist movement stems from Paris and that until we develop artists of equal calibre we shall have to go there for our inspiration.

*Courtesy Reinhardt Co., New York*

HENRI ROUSSEAU

RAIN IN THE JUNGLE

# ROUSSEAU LE DOUANIER

BY

HENRY McBRIDE

THERE is the smile of recognition. The whole world smiled at Charley Chaplin, and smiled so often that Charley had become a millionaire before scientists thought the matter worth an explanation. Thereupon it was seen that this irresistible response of the multitude to the art of the plaintive comedian was due to the audience's self-identification with the hero. He embodied for them that yearning desire to ward off defeat which is, so the analysts say, at the inner core of every human being.

Something of the same sort of thing is at the root of the ever-widening appreciation of the art of Henri Rousseau. He was an humble employee in the custom-house service, "Rousseau le Douanier," who painted for his amusement in his hours of ease. If any man was ever born to be obscure he appeared to be that person; yet if he ever thought of himself as being obscure it certainly never daunted his spirit. He may have dreamed of being great and famous—as who does not?—but it is scarcely likely he ever seriously counted upon it. He was "just one of the millions." But millions of people are happy in obscurity in France and know definitely what it is to be French. No depths of poverty can prevent them from being polite, from being gay, gallant and enthusiastic about ideas. The poorest in that land can always manage a "gala" upon occasion, or at least he knows how to make a fête out of a bit of bread and a glass of wine.

So Henri Rousseau, though modest in fortune, had open access to the spiritual riches of France.

He lacked the culture of the schools but he knew the things of the heart. There is something indescribably touching, now that he *is* famous, in the accounts that are given of the "musical evenings" held in the artist's house, in the peculiarly bour-

geois avowals made by the bride and groom upon the occasion of the painter's second marriage—both parties to the match confessing tender memories of their former spouses—and, in fact, in all the episodes of Rousseau's simple but happy life. It was his total lack of so-called "culture," no doubt, that enabled him in his pictures to set forth so unhesitatingly the figment of his dreams. One smiles at them at first, just as one smiled at the Charley Chaplin films, scarcely aware that one is smiling in complete sympathy. There is something ridiculous in M. Juniet's family, crowded to overflowing into the "charrette" for a Sunday ride in the Bois, but there is also something triumphant—a "bon bourgeois" dream of prosperity. There are enough mistakes in academic drawing in the "Heureux Quator" to make the late Mr. Bouguereau turn over in his grave, but on the other hand there is such an authentic sense of beauty, such a rhythmic placement of the figures on the canvas, that poor Mr. Bouguereau, by comparison with this poet of the people, Rousseau, is proven a mere workingman. So it goes throughout the list. You begin by laughing, but if you are susceptible at all to beauty, you are almost reduced, at the end, to tears.

One of the very greatest of these pictures, "La Bohémienne Endormie," was for a time in this country, in the collection of John Quinn, but it is now again in France. It shows a sleeping figure, stark and stiff, on the desert sands, with an appalling lion in close proximity. One is not sure whether it is a dream lion, a dream episode, but there is something in the picture that chills the blood in your veins, and definitely disturbs for hours your carefully built-up dependence upon mere facts. An even greater work, I believe, is the "Fête à la Mairie," which may also be called "Un Centenaire de l'Indépendance," for in it is that emotional force that always ignites in a French bosom at the mere mention of La Patrie, La Marseillaise, or the Fourteenth of July. This, just because it crystallizes French feeling so perfectly, I place among the very greatest of French productions. It is on a par with the great relief by Rude on the Arc

de Triomphe. It is less in size, it will never be seen, as is the Rude "Marseillaise" by marching armies brought to the Arc de Triomphe to celebrate martial victories, but once known by a Frenchman it will never be forgotten. Things compounded of the spirit are not to be measured in feet and inches. As long as such concrete expressions of itself can be put forth, France will know that it is essentially intact.

# TWO COMPOSITION SKETCHES BY PUVIS DE CHAVANNES

BY
WILL HUTCHINS

NOTHING in the field of Art is more revealing than the composition sketch of a master-decorator. Such a sketch, recording as it does the very process of generation, lays bare the intimate secrets of that most elusive and essential thing, the evolution of the pictorial idea. The layman wants "finished" pictures; the wise critic knows that at every step the true work of art is finished, for it is alive from the first stroke, and so has the only finish which life itself ever has, the reality of a *process of becoming*. That is why the great Daumier "L'Emeute" of the Phillips Gallery, may be held to rank first in that glorious group of Daumiers; the idea was caught at white heat and stands revealed in the moment of birth.

In a wholly different manner, but equally significant, are the two great composition sketches by Puvis de Chavannes for the decorations commissioned by the City of Marseilles for the Musée des Beaux Arts in the Palais de Longchamps. The completed decorations were installed in 1869. The sketches date from the previous year.

The significance of this commission at that point in the development of Puvis as a master-decorator was profound. Here was opportunity to function, and to function untrammelled. The greatest problem of the nascent decorator is that of being allowed to decorate at all. Decorations in public buildings are commissioned rarely in modern times, and when they are commissioned they go to men of established position. It is an act of faith to give a prominent space in a public building to a man of untried powers. Few boards of award, building committees or the like, can read the promise of a nascent style or even see the possibilities of a promising sketch. Now, if decoration is to

function at all it must function organically. There must be an act of specific creation under specific conditions. In the spacious days of the Renaissance the picture was unthinkable apart from its function. Setting, significance, theme, and treatment were all parts of an organic unity in which the function was completely realized. It is the constantly recurring tragedy of much modern effort that the function itself is denied. One does not have to commit himself touching the ultimate value of Watts, for instance, to remember with poignant regret his begging to be allowed to decorate, and at his own expense, even a railroad station, and his begging in vain.

Puvis had been more fortunate. Thanks to his own private means, his generosity, his enthusiasm for the task he had essayed, and, finally, to the perceiving eye of an architect* who saw his chance to profit by the fact that the Government had acquired a canvas too large for ordinary museum purposes, official inertia had been so far broken down as to permit the installation of the four great panels, "War and Peace," "Work and Rest," which still make the little Museum at Amiens the Holy of Holies in the cult of modern decoration. Finally, in 1865, a definite commission to continue the series with the "Ave Picardia Nutrix" marked the turn of the tide. Puvis had found his function and demonstrated his inalienable right to it. Art, we might add, was once more self respecting. Amiens is forever secure in her position as the site of the coming of age of Puvis, his attainment of functional majority.†

To Marseilles, then, goes the credit for being the first city to seize the opportunity to secure the services of a man who had demonstrated his right to be taken seriously. It was hardly a sheer act of faith, this commission, for Puvis had won his spurs, and the city of the South had already become his debtor by his previous presentation to her museum of his earlier panel, "Retour de Chasse." But in view of the fact that a definite com-

*Diet by name. He should have a monument.

†The "Ludus Pro Patria" which completes the Amiens group was installed fifteen years later.

mission was offered we cannot quibble over motives. The world at large was by no means yet aware that another great decorator had arrived. Marseilles, too, shall have her meed of praise. She opened the second door of opportunity, and Puvis, with his usual poised self-reliance, entered.

Self-reliance is no empty "cliche" in this case, for never did a decorator set aside, with more calm assurance, the obvious temptations of the situation. The subject which suggested itself to him bristled with the dangers of the easily acceptable commonplace. There were two spaces to fill, and the history of the city presented an almost inescapable division of the subject: Marseilles, ancient and modern. Puvis was ever the poet when it came to wording titles, and he was not ashamed to put good, honest titles to his decorations. "Marseille, la cite phoceene," and "Marseille, le porte d'Orient," so he phrased it at first. But the term "phocéene" was heavy with pedantry to the common ear, however poetic to the scholar, and the final title, "La Colonie Grecque" was substituted. Lucidity is one of the major virtues of Puvis always, and he was willing to extend it to the titles which people demand. He never dealt in cryptograms.

But beyond the titles, what? Nobody has ever known better than Puvis that titles and literary ideas do not make pictures. From the first he dealt in purely pictorial idiom. Today we can see that it is so. In 1865 it was less clear. Puvis stood in the position of heir to a double inheritance. His was the real "juste milieu". At Amiens one might in those days have been pardoned for hazarding, had a formula been demanded: "Equal parts of Poussin and Delacroix with a dash of Chasseriau." The great battle of classicism and romanticism, as we can now see, was a battle over terms and externals, literary connotations. Courbet had opened one way of escape, but it was a way foreign to the needs and the temper of Puvis. In a certain sense these two panels are the embodiment of the end of the great battle, for one is classic, without being academic, and the other romantic, without romanticism. Of that more may be said. For the mo-

ment we must try to see where we stand in the evolution of the idiom which was peculiar to Puvis himself. The consummate capacity for abstraction and synthesis, which is precisely the greatness of his idiom, first appears in Amiens in the "Ave Picardia Nutrix." It is well on its way in Marseilles.

Returning to the temptations of the moment we see that nowhere is the artistic intuition of Puvis more clearly in evidence than here. Biographers have noted the certainty with which he evaded the pitfalls in his path. The founding of the Greek colony had been attended by circumstances replete with romantic seductiveness. It was in point of history, or at least of local tradition, a story with every element of popular appeal —a dashing young hero, a native bride. What more could be asked? Virgil had sanctified the story type. The saga of the seas, the local cult, the sanction of history, all raised it above the merely banal. And Puvis brushed it all aside. For what? Pure abstract decoration is not quite the answer. That was still to come. "A vision, almost direct, of life," so Camille Mauclaire formularizes the reply, "it tries to set forth a race." Generic decoration would be a blind term indeed. "A vision of life" surely does not mean here, or elsewhere in Puvis, the crudely generalized anthropology of Cormon's lumpy cave man, nor, at the opposite extreme, the prettified noble savages in which Girodet-Triason and Prud'hon bodied forth the world of Rousseau and Chateaubriand. Puvis was painting history, not mythology, and history with him speaks the language of fact. Facts are not necessarily ignoble. A landscape based on fact, a real earth, supporting real men and women doing the things which are essential to life everywhere and always—so much for generalization; let Marseilles furnish the particulars.

Those who know Marseilles well are positive in the affirmation that Puvis has very definitely done the thing we so sternly forbid the decorator to do; he has painted a place. The topography of sea and shore and islands is accurately descriptive. The scene is the theme, so to speak, embroidered with figures doing

simple and essential things. There is little "Greek" about it except a hint of style in the draperies of the women at the right and in the architecture which is rising in the distance at the left. There is nothing "classical" in the academic sense. Think of the panoply of arms, the car-load of properties, more or less correct archaeologically, which any trained "decorator" of the school of Le Brun would have lugged in to point the fact that Marseilles *was* a Greek colony! Instead we get the definite foretaste of the calm and suave serenity of such later successes as the "Vision antique" and the "Bois sacrée" of Lyon. The glory that was Greece was not a matter of crested helmets nor of snowy colonnades, however much our distorted imaginations may insist on those details: it was a *poised serenity of soul*, and Puvis conveys that fact, again and again.

It cannot have been by inadvertence—one would not charge Puvis with that—that the sky he gave us here is heavily barred and broken. It has dramatic as well as decorative value, for it functions in darkening the blue sea, creating a powerful contrast for the shimmering beach line of the middle distance. Puvis has not yet attained that universal "fond" of unruffled calm of spirit which is his ultimate goal. He demonstrates here, as elsewhere, that he might easily have become a dramatic landscapist of high value.

In one respect the Phillips sketch for the Greek Colony shows the sure decorative instinct of Puvis as against the more labored quality of the finished panel. In the final version, for once, and perhaps only once, he allowed the "élan" of the subject to betray him, as Michel Angelo had done in the Deluge panel of the Sistine ceiling, into a loss of scale. The insistence on the figures and details of the distant plane, which are bound to become petty, was a pitfall. In his later work Puvis demonstrates an ever firmer grasp of that first principle of mural painting, the preservation of the integrity of the wall. He learns neither to make holes in it, like Pinturicchio, nor to articulate it into a specious plasticity, like Michel Angelo. This does not mean

PUVIS DE CHAVANNES

GREEK COLONY

PUVIS DE CHAVANNES

PORT OF THE ORIENT

that he abjures the third dimension. Far from it. But the sense of integrity in the structural facts of plane and scale is with him increasingly to the end. In the sketch his instinct is right.

"Marseille, porte de l'Orient," is almost unique in the whole range of Puvis' work. It is, perhaps, the nearest aproach to decoration by illustration that we have in his major work. The story goes that he was for a time baffled in the quest for his motive. The natural and obvious composition would have been a view of the modern harbor, from the shore, a mere restatement in modern terms of the first panel, with the bustle of commerce to fill the serene spaces. But after wrestling with the theme and finding himself thwarted by its obviousness he made one day an excursion to one of the islands, and, coming back, saw the city gleaming in full light between the deep blue of the bay and the violet sky of late afternoon. The motive was revealed. The gateway of the East should be seen as a pilgrim from the East would see it.

Puvis has composed a decoration out of the materials that lay at hand. Abstraction and synthesis are not lacking, but they are applied to strictly modern facts. No Frenchman of 1868 could be wholly insensible to the romance of the East, for romanticism was ebbing away through its devotion to that very theme, but Puvis lets the motive come to him, on the very ship which brings the East to the West. Modern ships, modern sailors, a modern harbor—all had to be made into decoration by the process of simplification, of arrangement, of that subordination of the part to the whole which is the basic principle of monumental design. In a composition in which the foredeck of a modern ship fills exactly one half the area of the panel, he manages to handle his forms in such a way that the true theme, the gleaming city and its bustling life, dominates the component parts.

It is not necessary to catalogue the oriental types grouped on the deck, nor the accessories with which Puvis has permitted himself to enrich the foreground. They are all literally descriptive and specific, but they are also parts of a decoration. Once

again, in 1890, Puvis attacked the problem of building modern materials into monumental decoration, in the "Inter Artes et Naturam" at Rouen. It is a success, but not, perhaps, outstanding. In 1868 Puvis had not perfected his formula and the by-path which branches off in this sketch and its resultant decoration might have been followed further. He chose another route. Mr. Brangwyn has followed the by-path often enough but that is another story, with a very different conclusion. Puvis, with his poised detachment of soul, was the last man in the world to be seduced into adopting the brassy orchestration of glorified commerce. Yet there is splendor as well as subtle forms of color, resonance even. Later his color attains calm, the detractors say, by means of pallor. That is not true, though it is true that he is habitually, so to speak, in the upper air. Here he is concerned with the drama of contrasts, gleaming white against deep blue and rich violet, pointed up with Venetian red.

Aside from color the interest of the composition is in the rather baffling problems of architectural form. The sketch bears witness to the fact that it was not without effort that the monumental quality was secured. Puvis had by no means perfected a method, and he was dealing with an idea rather apart from his whole program. In that moment the quest was a real quest. These are not only sketches, they are studies, and the moment of generation was, we conjecture, not one of assured certainty. He never groped, but in the Greek Colony especially it is evident that he experimented.

This brings us back to where we began. We are privileged to see, in these sketches, some important decorations in the moment of becoming. We are never permitted, however, with Puvis, to share the emotions of the painter. Did that reserved and frock-coated gentleman ever experience

"the first fine careless rapture?"

It is no concern of ours. Careless he certainly never was, at any period. Born and bred to engineering, as befitted a decorator

who was to rebuild the crumbling bases of the relation of painting to architecture, he was the master of logical processes of work. The French have a proverb: "It is only the first step that costs." Mr. Belloc has written a very clever book to disprove it. The work of carrying through a mural decoration from any sketch, however happily conceived, would do it as well. But the first step must be in the right direction. When it is, as in this instance, the step of a giant, we may well call it, in Croce's penetrating phrase, a sure case of lyrical intuition.

# A NOTE ON SUBJECTIVE PAINTING

BY

AUGUSTUS VINCENT TACK

THE mind can always accept what is known but it is the unknown which intrigues and challenges it. Ever reaching out, the mind searches for new forms and new facts. As soon as these are found they are pigeon-holed in the storehouse of knowledge. They belong to the Academy.

The content of objective painting is soon compassed. In subjective painting, however, where the boundaries are forever leading on and never ending, the mind is fascinated by the adventure and seldom fatigued, as it so often is by seeing, time and again, the same statements of fact, the same relationships of objects. In painting, of whatever kind, that which eventually matters most is the filling of the space; in short, the design. After the subject has ceased to be considered and after the special manner or technique is no longer thought about, this conscious disposition of the colors and the shapes in space through rhythmical coordination remains the chief interest. Maurice Denis, for his part, stated in perfectly correct terms the same truth when he wrote "Remember that a picture, before being any sort of an anecdote, is in essence a plane surface covered with colors put together in a given order."*

A painting to the average mind means the objective representation of some place or thing. It seems to be difficult for many to grasp that the essential qualities of painting should be sufficient in themselves, apart from all representation. Those who demand the rendition of objective realities in painting seldom realize that only a partial truth can ever be given. One does not copy nature. One is inspired by it to create on one's own account.

"In fact," remarks Baudelaire, "all good draughtsmen and true draw from the image in their brain and not from Nature.

*From "Art et Scholastique," by Jacques Maritain.

If you adduce the admirable sketches of Raphael, Watteau, and many others, we say they are notes, very detailed, but yet mere notes. When a true artist has arrived at the actual execution of his work, the model would be to him more a hindrance than a help. It even happens that men like Daumier and M. Guys, long accustomed to use their memory and to store it with images, find that in the presence of the model and the crowd of detail it involves, their principal faculty is put out and, as it were, paralysed."*

Again, Cézanne said: "I wanted to copy Nature. I did not get so far. But I was pleased when I found out for myself that the sun, for instance, could not be *reproduced*, that this Element had to be the inspiration and the source of knowledge for the painter's own creations with color."†

The quality of abstractness in painting is one of degree. It is a truism to say that all painting is abstract. It ranges from the most precise of objective renderings (which are still symbols and conventions) to the extreme adumbrations of the visionary.

Roger Fry, in his critique of "La Parade" by Seurat, refers to it as the most abstract painting he knows. This may be so but it is surely not the most abstract painting possible. Roger Fry goes on to say, "Even the purest and most abstract work of art has some references to the surrounding world of actual life. At the very least it derives somewhere from an experience which occurred to the artist in that world. This would be true, for instance, of the purest music ever invented. For the painter it is almost certain that not only did his original experience occur in the actual world but that a great number of visual data will have entered into that experience, and, being an essential part thereof, will have passed over into the work of art. . . . But the relation of these visible facts to the final result, to the essential meaning of the picture, is by no means a fixed one. It requires, sometimes, a great deal of tact to find the way from

*"L'Art Romantique".

†Maurice Denis, "Theories."

one to the other. Indeed I suspect that it is somewhere in this passage that the majority of gross mistakes in appreciation are made. It is somewhere on the way between the ostensible external appearance and the innermost significance of the form that so many people, including critics, occasionally trip up."*

Without in any sense meaning to identify the art of painting with the art of music there are unavoidable analogies which are an aid to understanding. Music has been called the absolute art because it is free and in no way associated with natural sounds, nor in any sense ever a mere reproduction of them. Painting should be just as free. It too can be absolute. The pleasure inherent to it results from harmonious relations of color rhythmically progressive. Thus painting appeals to the eye exactly as music to the ear and both awaken emotions in the same absolute sense.

This is not a brief against representation in painting, which will always have its place and its universal appeal. But it is an argument for a phase of painting which truly has never been understood. It invites the mind to the opening of a door which leads out to *the playground of the imagination.* It is only then that the eye is unprejudiced, innocent, and free to behold color and form in their subtle relations.

There is no haphazard in nature. So there must be order and organization in subjective design. In fact, the principles of nature are ever the best and most perfect guides. It was Leonardo who said "if you would find the best designs study *the accidents of nature.*" Who has not watched from the prow of a boat the white foam lying on black water, always changing, always following a law in its pattern, as beautiful as old lace? Who has not watched the rhythmical serrations of sand, or snow-drifts blown by the wind, or wind blown clouds, or the reflections of leaves in water, or patches of sweet fern growing on a hillside, or rain-stained walls, or the foliage of thick growing crops?

**Burlington Magazine.*

If painting is a super-language beginning at the point where words cease, it follows that it is quite impossible to explain with words the logic of paint. Painting must speak for itself. Words may help a little to clarify the principles which lie back of the practice and they can minister to appreciation of aesthetic beauty. They are, however, quite powerless to reach to that plenitude of meaning which, after all, can only be felt.

# OUR EXHIBITIONS

## DECORATIVE PANELS *of* AUGUSTUS VINCENT TACK

BY

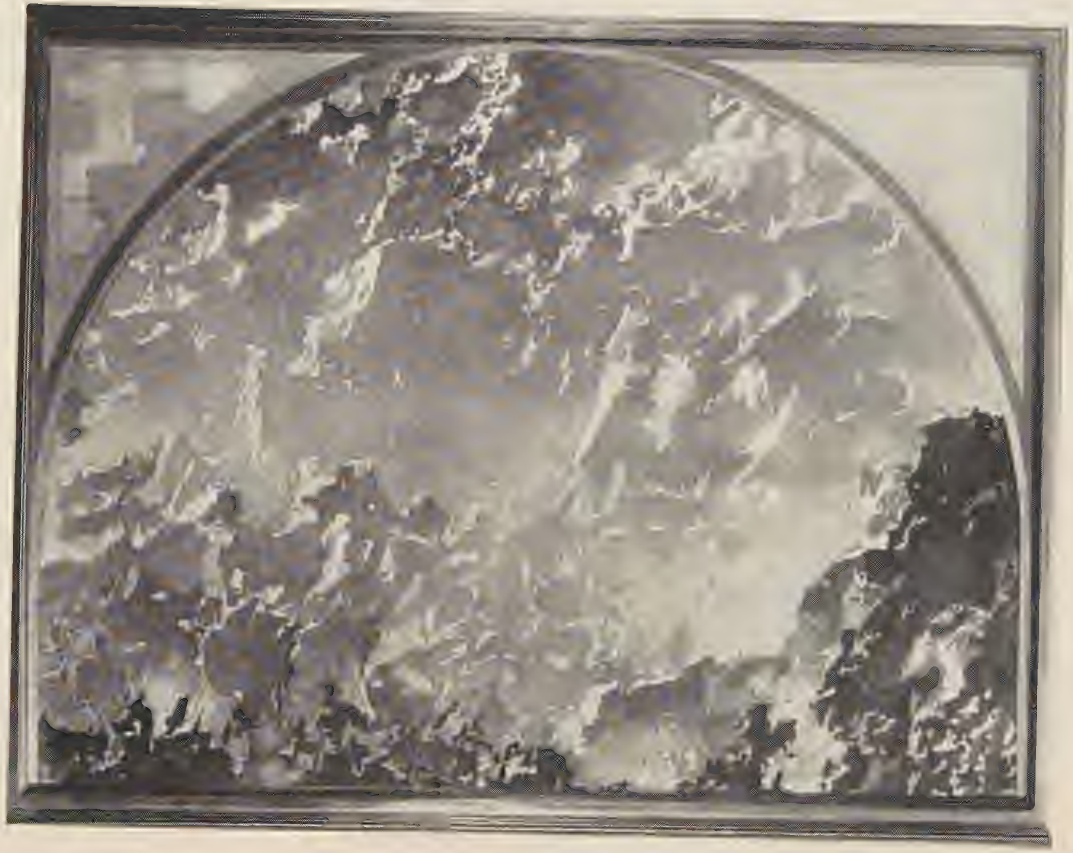
DUNCAN PHILLIPS

GREAT compositions in music need no literary interpretations. Program notes expressing the subjective reactions of an individual critic or commentator may or may not prepare the minds and the senses of a concert audience for the most alert and sensitive reception of the ordered and rhythmical sequence of creative sounds. Great compositions of color are no less independent of the written or spoken word. Just as the critic can never be sure that he has justly interpreted the creative artist so the artist himself can never communicate in words a symbolism which he has conceived as well as executed so self-sufficiently in color. Mystical thought, in a painter who *is* a painter and not a literary man, requires color for its expression. Whatever the painter himself can tell of his own symbolism, of the inspirational origin of his creative designing, and whatever any critic can read into the artist's abstractions through sympathetic reveries, may or may not prepare the mind and the senses of other beholders for the most alert and sensitive reception of the ordered and rhythmical sequence of color-vibrations.

It is therefore with extreme reluctance that I write even a brief note on the new decorative panels which Augustus Vincent Tack has painted for the art library of the Phillips Memorial Gallery. What he has told me of his conceptions for these great works I can and I should repeat as a matter of record. Yet such an art of color only reaches its plenitude of destined power when its ecstacies, profound meanings and spiritual revelations unfold from untold depths within us. As time goes on, through long sessions of observation and of thought but without any aid whatever from those who dare to interpret such purely subjective experiences of the artist's soul, one may learn to ap-

AUGUSTUS VINCENT TACK

ECSTASY



AUGUSTUS VINCENT TACK

LIBERATION

proach to that intimate understanding of the artist's inspiration and his aspiration where one also catches glimpses of his ecstatic vision. For, as Carlyle expressed it, what the great mystic, whether poet, painter or musician, can do, is to "lead us to the edge of the Infinite to let us, for moments, gaze." For moments! But Carlyle had not reckoned with the greater degree of permanence, the more substantial embodiment of thought possible to color-music which leads us on and on into what Tack calls "the playgrounds of the imagination" and all those realms beyond human experience and beyond material and objective reality. The great artists of the Far East conceived of their pictorial and sculptural art as aids to meditation. Art and religion were closely related if not identical. The finite world of qualitative joys and of individual sensations was but a bright promise of the Infinite and Eternal for which our souls were preparing. Tack is a devout mystic who sees God in everything. He is inspired with the mysticism of an active Christianity rather than of a passive Buddhism and so his decorative imagination is dynamic, sensuous and joyous with the energy and the gaiety of those armoured with the spiritual strength concerned with the here and now and not alone with the hereafter. He affirms his faith in Divine purpose through his grand patterns and it is as sincere a faith as ever inspired the Gothic builders.

The new decorations by Tack are comprehensive in their symbolism. Between the two mysteries of life's beginnings and its end surges the restless stream of human consciousness. Rhythm, Order and Balance are the active organic principles of life and art. Ecstasy, Sorrow and Fortitude, these are the great emotional states of being. Exaltation of the Mind and Liberation of the Spirit—for these consummations life evolves.

The room in which such universal emotions and cosmic conceptions are to be suggested to those who come to meditate before them is to be barrel-vaulted with lunettes at each end. The vault is to be penetrated on each side with walls providing five

decorative panels. At the four corners are elemental patterns conveying the idea of the outposts of Time, the borderlands of Eternity. Within these bounds of earthly experience Tack places, in his abundant and unprecedented language of subtly organized color and line, equivalents in design for the fullness of human life, its structural order, and its rich and subtle emotions. The lunette at one end is entitled Ecstasy. It conveys with surprising relations of thrilling color, azure, blue-violet, red-violet, red-orange, coral, yellow-green and pearly whites, the radiant gladness of the heart for the great gift of life. In this decoration we feel the joy of time as it flees, the sense of Youth exultant, of Life triumphantly justifying itself in art and in all the other expressive outlets of the spirit. The exuberance of nature with its leaf edges and flower forms invites the artist to gallant adventures of discovery and to endless experiments in adaptation. For art is nothing if not praise of life and intelligent use of nature for the soul's expression. The lunette at the opposite end conveys, with lapis lazuli, earth reds, red violets, sky blues and glorious cloudshine, the freedom of the spirit, the concept of Liberation. No matter what the exigencies of life—no matter how inexorable the complex, crowded world and its cruelties of circumstance, yet through idealism the human spirit soars and attains at last to that liberation from the earth and all that is limited in time which we dream of as immortality.

The technique of Tack's panels is a development through many experimental years. French Luminism, Twachtman's refinements upon it—"pointillisme" and its mosaics of color, Chinese landscape art of the great periods, and Odilon Redon, all these may have contributed to the unfolding of Tack's new art of orchestrated color, of linear boundaries and directions in an amplitude of space. When Dunoyer de Segonzac visited our Gallery and saw the paintings of Twachtman and Tack on the same wall he immediately recognized the accord of spirit between them and asked me if they were not all the work of one man at different periods. He said that few American artists had

impressed him so much, for this art seemed, for all its culture, to be completely original and self sufficient. One must pause however and linger for many an hour before the Tack color symphonies to appreciate the consummate craftsmanship and to penetrate into this world of pure spirit apprehended through subtle sensations. The sense of space is created entirely by light and dark values, for the planes are two dimensional and their edges are positive and clearly defined. The harmonies are deep and various. Encrustations and films of lighter tones drawn over solid and brilliant underpaintings enrich the surfaces to such an extent that ladders should be provided for those of us who take intense delight from beautiful textures of oil paint and rare color combinations closely observed. D. P.

## A GROUP OF LYRIC PAINTERS IN OIL AND WATER COLOR

This exhibition is an experiment in hanging together in one small room pictures in both oil and water color by twelve artists of marked individuality and no common allegiance to any school or rule. The bond which exists between them, and the atmosphere of congenial give and take which will pervade our Little Gallery while they are in it, is the inevitable affinity of all true artists and especially of those whose work is created in a spirit of lyric poetry. Emphatically I do not mean literary painting—not even painting in which the subject matters very much. Lyricism in a painter means that quality of his mind and eye which gives him emotions he can only communicate by the touch of his brush, by the choice of his lines and colors, by the selection for his subjects of things he has loved to look upon and of the special lights in which they were seen. It may mean that he is aware of what is going on in nature and that he is somehow enabled to share in cosmic forces. It may mean only that he has felt the natural magic of trees and fruits and flowers or of little rivers and of little rooms

which one intimately knows. The poetry of a painter may be a matter of finding a synthesis for space, even with the simple arrangement of a few homely objects in over-lapping planes, or of hinting at one's intuition of a universal quality in some chance observation, perhaps of a mountain at a muted moment of shadowed radiance, or of a fishing craft at anchor riding the waves, or of tall masts stately in a harbour. There are many vivid moments of life recorded here without any claim that the records are important. And yet important they are, because true sensibility is rare, and the fact that modernity, in spite of its concerns with engines and complex organizations and new theories of space and the atom and the subconscious mind, can still produce a group of artists who can see and feel so simply and nevertheless with such exquisite subtlety and charm—the fact that our standardized world can still boast of such *individuals* is news of the most cheering and of the most vital consequence.

D. P.

# BOOK REVIEWS

## THE WHIRLIGIG OF TASTE

REVIEWED BY

WILLIAM M. IVINS, JR.

WHETHER or not one agrees with the thesis of E. E. Kellett's "The Whirligig of Taste"* it is written with so much gusto and such a swinging of good sonorous English that there can be very few people interested in its subject who will not get pleasure from its reading.

Although its title gives no clue to the fact, this volume of the Hogarth Lectures is confined to the discussion of "literary" as distinct from "artistic" taste. It provides a rapid history of the canons of literary criticism in classical times and in England, showing their changes and the powerful effect that political, economic and religious matters have had upon them. In view of the close connection between literary and artistic criticism, and the comparatively short period during which artistic criticism has been practiced, the study of literary criticism is of great importance to the student of art, if for no other reason than that it provides an infinitely longer space of time in which to observe the oscillations of taste. There has been acute literary criticism at least from the time of Pericles and there has rarely been a time that has not produced significant documents for its study. For practical purposes artistic criticism may be said to have begun in the Fifteenth Century and to have had for its first great practitioner, Vasari, the first edition of whose book appeared in 1550. The very word "aesthetic" was invented by Baumgarten, whose book on the analysis and formation of taste was published in 1750. In Kant's "Critique of Judgment" (1790) the word was used to mean the appreciation of the beautiful. Until late in the Eighteenth Century

*The Whirligig of Taste, by E. E. Kellett, Hogarth Lectures on Literature. Published by Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1929.

there was little art criticism as it is now understood, the Encyclopaedists in France and such an English writer as Sir Joshua Reynolds being among the earliest practitioners of the criticism of painting and its aesthetic valuation. Between Reynolds and Ruskin, Hazlitt was probably the most important English critic. Ruskin, whose books played such a dominant role in the middle of the last century, died in 1900. It is therefore obvious that our analytical, or introspective, criticism of pictures and works of art did not begin until almost literally within the lives of men still in middle life.

The results of the psychological investigations of such men as Charcot, Freud and Jung, did not begin to show themselves in criticism until the years just before the outbreak of the Great War. Would we know how men's minds worked in criticism we must therefore turn to literary criticism with its long and unbroken history. The great lessons that are to be drawn from the one are immediately applicable to the other, and for any student of art, especially if he belong to any of the self-conscious and self-confident groups which *know* what are good pictures and what are bad ones, and why, these lessons are of the greatest possible importance. They may be the means of saving him from appearing quite so quaint to his grandson as otherwise he is certain to be.

The first and the most important of Kellett's conclusions is: "That there are no permanent or established principles in criticism" and, therefore, that "the one thing certain is that there is no certainty." He follows this by pointing out how there is no canon of criticism, clearness, simplicity, grammatical accuracy, etc., etc., which has not been ignored by many of the greatest writers. His paragraphs could be easily rewritten by substituting for the literary principles the artistic ones, and by replacing the names of authors with the names of painters and sculptors—and none of his conclusions would be altered.

The simple fact that emerges from an historic survey of the combined histories of taste and painting is that the statement,

"that is a good picture," is so clipped and truncated that until it is filled out and finished it has no meaning at all. And it can have no meaning until it has been supplemented with the necessary "for whom" and "where" and "for what," the mere addition of which immediately robs the short statement of all its specious appearance of universality and brings it back, with a sickening, breath-taking jolt, to its very real particularity in time and space. As Mr. Kellett says, "If meant for children, *Othello* is one of the worst works in existence, and vastly inferior to *Little Arthur's History*." The point is not only unarguable but equally true of pictures. Let us change the names and see: "If meant for children Cézanne's *Baigneurs* is one of the worst works in existence, and vastly inferior to Caldecott's *Sing a Song of Sixpence*." There is no getting away from it. There it is, a hard, inescapable fact. All the abstract qualities in the world, all the modelling in colours, all the clear, plastic thought, will not make Cézanne's picture as good a picture for children as do the humour and the dramatic action and the charming detail of "And down came a black bird and nipped off her nose." And what is true as between certain kinds of grown-ups (for not all grown-ups have reached an understanding of Cézanne) and most healthy children, is equally true as between certain kinds of grown-ups and certain other kinds of grown-ups. It may be said that some of the grown-ups have not had as much experience or are not as sensitive as some of the others, but is it really true? They have had different experiences and actually have different sensibilities—but that is a very different thing. There is a good argument to be made to the effect that the more single-mindedly a man has studied pictures the less competent he is to have any true idea of their value in life.

As one whose business calls upon him at frequent intervals to travel about the world and to have earnest talks with people interested in art in such various places as New York and London, Paris and Florence, Berlin and Vienna, I can certify that just as in each of those cities there is a different speech and a

different history and a different cultural background, so is there a different taste in works of art.

In comparing and valuing these varied and irreconcilable tastes it must always be remembered that it is both a serious and a silly thing to condemn a whole people. Logically it is just as silly to condemn a single human being on the score that his ocular habits are not the same as our own or because he does not understand our particular lingo and is honest enough to admit it and to disagree with us.

Professor Proloff, after working long in a physiological laboratory, wrote an astonishing book on "Conditioned Reflexes," the gist of which can be put somewhat simply as follows: We must not forget our grandmothers, who were charming and lovely ladies, and very intelligent as well. When they were little girls their mothers began "to form their figures," and by the time they were twenty-one they had sixteen-inch waists and were held together by whalebones and stoutest and strongest corset strings. By the time they were thirty-five they were acutely uncomfortable if they had to go about without "them," said "they" gave them needed support, and they thought that anyone who did not sit bolt upright all the time was very ill-mannered. Ideas, especially tight ones, are very much like corsets. Slightly uncomfortable to begin with, they end by being indispensable and setting standards of conduct. Each new generation forms its own and, secure in them, is amused by its forbears and shocked at its successors.

That it is very largely in what you are used to, all this business of artistic taste, rather than in any abstract universal good or bad, is beautifully summed up in the story of the Abyssinian Prince and Mrs. Langtry. At a time when the Powers were fussing about in northeast Africa and each was trying to outdo the other in currying favor with Abyssinia, England brought the Prince up to London to show him the power and the might and the glory that were the British Empire, and as the "Jersey Lily" was just then one of its principal glories she was seated

next him at a long official dinner. At the end of the evening, as he bent to kiss her hand in parting, he told her that she was the most beautiful and the most charming woman he had met in England, "and Madame," said he, "were you but fat and black, you would be utterly irresistible."

Let anyone think back to what he liked five years ago, and ten, and twenty, and thirty, and then let him remember that it is not the work of art that has changed but himself. And also let him ponder what it means if he still likes those same things or any of them, unless that he himself insofar has stopped growing, has begun to lose or actually has lost his quickening of imagination and response? The crystallization of personal taste is a symptom of senescence—and what is functionally old is not "good" or "true" it is merely a "has been." Nations and societies are just like people. The only way they escape the inelasticity of death is by growing, and growing is merely another name for progressive as distinct from regressive change. Somehow it is all very hard to reconcile with any such thing as "good art" in the abstract or in the universal. At most any painting is only "good" or "bad" *now*, here, and for "me." The man who thinks his "me" is or should be a universal exemplar of good taste or thought or belief or conduct, should pull down his Aesop and reread the fable of the frog who tried to be as big as a cow.

It is quite probable that there are people who will regard my attitude towards art as being little other than an exhibition of complete and sceptical pessimism. They will think that it sweeps away all the hard and fast certainties without which life loses not only all its savor but its promise. Without something to cling to they are lost. But this is only a habit of mind, nothing else, and has as much to do with truth (and in much the same way) as the ostrich's well known method of seeing through dangers and difficulties. All we have to do, though I know that its simplicity is also the chief reason for its seeming difficulty, is to alter our habits of mind, "to swear off" pontifi-

cating and blowing ourselves up like that unfortunate frog and to admit naively that the world is as it is. Canons of taste and aesthetic principles are much like grammar—they were all invented after the event. They are chiefly of use to foreigners. Natives do not need them. They are *post hoc* explanatory mechanisms of the most dangerous kind because we accept them for truths instead of the mere "as ifs" they really are. And not only that—almost every one of them has its priests who find that their order and its well being depends upon the perpetuation of this misunderstanding. Away back in the middle ages William of Occam warned against the construction of unnecessary entities in a doctrine since famous as "Occam's razor." In the course of time it did for the scholastic philosophy, showing it up as mere special pleading rather than the investigation and means of understanding that it proclaimed itself. If we were to apply it to "good taste" and its rules, regulations and beliefs, it would effect the same liberation of art that it did of philosophy. And there can be little doubt that the result would be as fortunate. That kind of thing is not pessimism.

ALLEN TUCKER

TREE AND BARN

PAUL GAUGUIN

IDYLL OF TAHITI

# CATALOGUE OF EXHIBITIONS

*March—June, 1930*

## MAIN GALLERY

### MODERN ART AND ITS SOURCES

Egyptian Limestone Head, 18th Dynasty

| | |
|---|---|
| El Greco | The Repentant Peter |
| Chardin | A Bowl of Plums |
| Constable | On the Stour |
| Daumier | The Uprising |
| Corot | The Farm, Early Morning |
| Puvis de Chavannes | Greek Colony |
| Puvis de Chavannes | Port of the Orient |
| Manet | Ballet Espagnol |
| Renoir | Déjeuner des Canotiers |
| Cézanne | Self Portrait |
| Gauguin | Idyll of Tahiti |
| Bonnard | Children and Cat |
| Bonnard | Plaza del Popolo |
| Derain | Head of a Girl |
| Derain | Southern France |
| Derain | A Brunette |
| Weber | Three Jugs |

## LOWER GALLERY

Decorations by Augustus Vincent Tack

destined for the Reception Room of the Phillips Memorial Gallery

# LITTLE GALLERY

*March*

## A GROUP OF LYRIC PAINTERS

| | |
|---|---|
| Cézanne | Mont St. Victoire |
| Henri Rousseau | The Pink Candle |
| Vuillard | The Newspaper |
| Bonnard | A Little River |
| Bonnard | Strawberries |
| Sickert | The Makings of an Omelette |
| Roussel | The Mediterranean |
| Marin | Franconia (*Water Color*) |
| Marin | Fishing Smacks (*Water Color*) |
| Marin | The Hudson (*Water Color*) |
| Tucker | Tree and Barn (*Water Color*) |
| Demuth | Roofs and Chimneys (*Water Color*) |
| Olive Rush | Charros before a Parade (*Water Color*) |
| Marjorie Phillips | Marigolds |
| Clairin | A Chateau |

*April*

Recent Paintings by Harold Weston

*May*

Recent Paintings by Marjorie Phillips

MARJORIE PHILLIPS

THE OPEN ROAD

*Courtesy Montross Galleries*

HAROLD WESTON

CYCLAMEN

# INDEX

Titles of complete articles are shown in SMALL CAPITALS


Allenby, Viscount....15, 35
Archaic....166
Archaistic....167
Artist's Point of View....7
ART AND UNDERSTANDING, Phillips....7
ART AND THE INTERNATIONAL MIND, Phillips....145
ART AND THE BUSINESS MAN, Watkins....149

Ballet, Espagnol....38
Barker, Virgil....106, 171
Baroque....92, 95, 172
Baudelaire....240
Bell, Clive....15, 23, 24, 26, 36, 82
Blume, Peter....218
BOOK REVIEWS, Ivins....251
Bonnard, Pierre....63, 143, 199
Braque, Georges....57, 139, 196
Brook, Alexander....218
Brownell, W. C....55
Bruce, Edward....189
Brush, Geo. de F....220

CATALOGUE OF EXHIBITIONS..117, 118, 259, 260
Cézanne, Paul..58, 83, 102, 136, 143, 183, 241, 253
Chaplin, Charley....227
Classic....168
Costigan....189
Cubism....65, 104
CURRENT AMERICAN ART SEASON, Flint....177

DAUMIER....46
Daumier, Honore....46, 76, 230
Davies, Arthur B....210
Davis, Stuart....219
Decorative Panels by Tack....220, 240
Degas, H. G. E....44
Denis, Maurice....240
Derain, Andre....58, 78, 200
DERAIN AND THE NEW DIGNITY IN PAINTING....78
Despiau....191
Dewey, John....15, 23, 24, 25
Dufy, Raoul....188

EL GRECO, CÉZANNE, PICASSO....96
El Greco....65, 92, 96, 100
Ellis, Havelock....15, 22, 31, 32
Emerson, R. W....28
English Painters....220
Expressionists....64, 65, 70

Faure, Elie....10, 43
Flemish Painters....223
Flint, Ralph....177
Fosdick, Harry Emerson....15, 26, 27, 33
Fosdick, Raymond....27
Fry, Roger....8, 241

Galsworthy, John....15, 17, 21, 22, 24
Gauguin, Paul....52, 63, 187
Gavarni....76
Gibbs, Sir Phillip....34
Giorgione....51
Goya, Francisco....38, 42
Guys, Constantin....76

Hopkinson, Charles....219
Hutchins, Will....230

Individualism....10
International Flag....146
INTER-CREATING INTELLIGENCE, Phillips....21
Impressionists....60, 64, 70
Ivins, W. M. Jr....251

JOHN MARIN, Barker....106

KARL KNATHS....110
Knaths, Karl....110, 218
Kantor, Morris....140, 217
Karfiol, Bernard....192
Kellett, E. E....251
Kisling....204
Kuhn, Walt....89, 192
Kuniyoshi....192

Lani, Maria....190
Lay, Charles Downing....156
Lippman, Walter....13
LIVING WITH PICTURES, Lay....156
Ludwig, Emil....29
Lyric Painters, Group of....249

McBride, Henry....227
MANET'S "BALLET ESPAGNOL"....38
Manet, Edouard....38
MANY MINDEDNESS OF MODERN PAINTING, Phillips....50
Marin, John....106, 144, 195, 205, 223
Martin, Everett Dean....25
Massey, Hon. Vincent....146
Mather, Frank Jewett, Jr....9, 44, 47
Matisse, Henri....45, 51, 52, 57, 196, 203
Mauny, Jacques....204
MODERN ART, 1930, Phillips....131
Modern Art....50
Modern....160
Modernist....163
Modernistic....165
Modigliani....180
Museum of Modern Art, 178, 179, 183, 191, 195

Nineteen Americans....191
NOTE ON BAROQUE IN PAINTING....92
NOTE ON SUBJECTIVE PAINTING, Tack....240

O'Keeffe, Georgia....192, 214
OUR EXHIBITIONS, Phillips....244
Overstreet, H. A....36, 37

Painting in Paris ..... 195
Phillips, Duncan ..... 7, 21, 50, 131, 244
Picasso, Pablo, 58, 96, 99, 136, 137, 139, 143, 195
Plowman, Max ..... 30
Proloff, Professor ..... 254
Puvis de Chavannes ..... 230

Redon, Odilon ..... 56
Renoir, Pierre Auguste ..... 76, 187
Robinson, Boardman ..... 219
Roerich, Nicholas ..... 32, 145
Romantic ..... 171
Rousseau Le Douanier, McBride ..... 227
Rousseau, Henri ..... 139, 227
Russell, Bertrand ..... 29
Ryder ..... 171

School of Paris ..... 177, 178, 179
Shaw, Bernard ..... 35
Seurat ..... 187
Sterne, Maurice ..... 86, 89, 189
Stieglitz, Alfred ..... 205
Subjective Painting, Note on, Tack ..... 240
Symposium, A ..... 21

Tack, Augustus Vincent .. 71, 144, 220, 240, 244
Terms We Use in Art Criticism ..... 160
Twachtman, John, H. ..... 71, 248
Two Composition Sketches by Puvis de Chavannes, Hutchins ..... 230

Uhde, Fritz ..... 99, 100, 103
Uprising, The ..... 48, 230

Vague Thoughts on Art, Galsworthy .. 17
Van Gogh, Vincent ..... 63, 184
Velasquez ..... 58

Watkins, C. L. ..... 149
Whirligig of Taste, reviewed by W. M. Ivins ..... 251
Whitney Museum of Modern Art ..... 180
Who Painted This Picture? ..... 75

Zimmern, Alfred ..... 35
Zola, Emile ..... 41

# ILLUSTRATIONS

Bonnard, Le Midi ..... 62
Strawberries ..... 126
Plaza del Popolo ..... 142
The Palm ..... 201
Braque, Plums, Pears, Nuts and Knife ..... 53
Abstract Still Life ..... 161
Burchfield, Promenade ..... 193
Burliuk, Slope of Bear Mountain ..... 61
Cézanne, Self Portrait ..... 98
Mont St. Victoire ..... 141
Still Life ..... 181
Chardin, A Bowl of Plums ..... 134
Chavannes, Greek Colony ..... 235
Port of the Orient ..... 236
Chirico, Horses ..... 211
Constable, On the Stour ..... 133
Corot, Portrait of Woman ..... 54
Daumier, The Strong Man ..... *November Cover*
The Uprising ..... 2
Davies, Horses of Attica ..... 212
Derain, Decorative Landscape ..... 6
Head of Girl ..... 54
Road Through the Forest ..... 79
Southern France ..... 80
A Brunette ..... 169
El Greco, The Repentant Peter ..... 93
Gauguin, Idyll of Tahiti ..... 258
Kantor, Union Square ..... 130
Knaths, Cock and Glove ..... 111
Studio Table ..... 112
Krohg, The Blacksmith ..... 162
Kuhn, Girl and Mirror ..... 67
Performer Resting ..... 68
L'Inconnu, Street Scene ..... 74
Manet, Ballet Espagnol ..... 39
Marin, Franconia ..... 107
Gray Sea ..... 108
From Horse Mountain ..... 207
Fishing Smacks ..... 208
Matisse, Pose of Buddha ..... 202
O'Keeffe, Ranchos Church ..... 215
Picasso, Early Morning ..... 97
Abstraction ..... 97
Seated Woman ..... 197
Woman in White ..... 198
Phillips, Bowl of Fruit ..... 116
The Open Road ..... 261
Renoir, Mme. Henriot ..... 186
Rousseau, The Pink Candle ..... *March Cover*
Rain in the Jungle ..... 226
Ryder, Fishermen's Huts ..... 119
Sickert, Makings of an Omelette ..... 221
Sterne, The Reapers ..... 87
Tack, Ecstasy ..... 245
Liberation ..... 246
Tucker, Tree and Barn ..... 257
Twachtman, Emerald Pool ..... 73
Van Gogh, Women of the Fields ..... 61
Cypresses ..... 176
Vuillard, The Newspaper ..... 148
Weber, Three Jugs ..... 194
Weston, The New Stove ..... 61
Cyclamen ..... 262



NORMAN T. A. MUNDER & CO., PRINTERS, BALTIMORE

*O6-DII-308*